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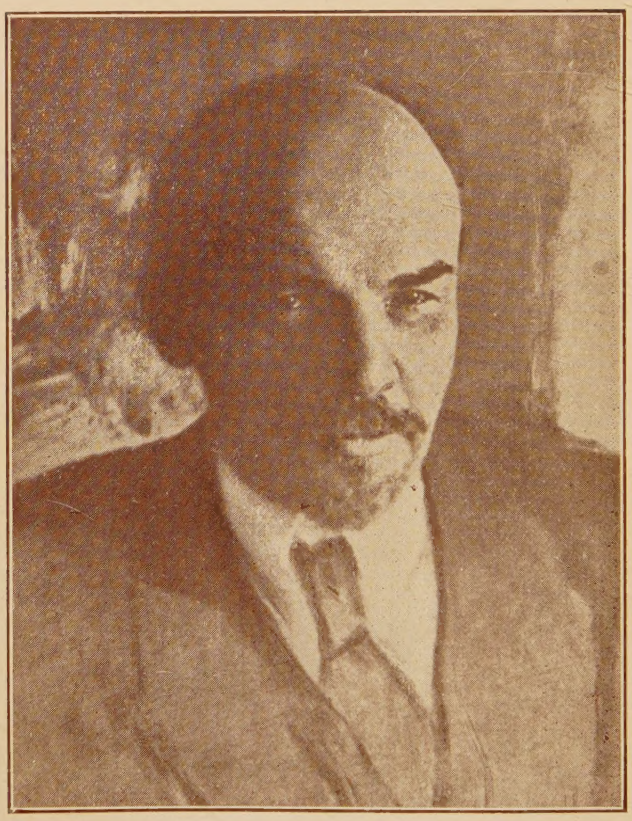
To Miss Moses
with the best
of wishes from
Albert Rhys Williams

Feb 19 1920.

# LENIN

## THE MAN AND HIS WORK



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NIKOLAI LENIN

# LENIN

## The Man and His Work

BY

ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS

*and the impressions of*

COL. RAYMOND ROBINS

*and*

ARTHUR RANSOME

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# LENIN

## The Man and His Work

# INTRODUCTION

By Albert Rhys Williams

## *1. The First Wild Tales About Lenin*

The world knows very little of the man who for two years has been the Premier of Russia. The London *Times* says that this is due to the natural reticence and aloofness of Lenin. "If Lenin appears to the average Englishman as a red-shirted, high-booted pirate-chief, the fault is chiefly of his own making."

Hardly. Lenin is not entirely to blame. The blockade and the British censorship have had considerable share in it. They completely severed Russia from the rest of the world. Even the Associated Press could not break

through that censorship. It has never been accused of revolutionary leanings, but a large percentage of its mild cable despatches were regarded by the British as dangerous to the American people. The British held to be dangerous any facts that reflected favorably on the Soviet Government or its Premier.

Consequently, in lieu of facts about Lenin the public was served with fancies and legends by the "special correspondents" in Paris, London, Stockholm and Copenhagan.

In one cabled despatch Lenin would appear in the morning narrowly escaping out of the clutch of the enemy by leaping from an armored train in Siberia, while an afternoon despatch would reveal Lenin looking through the bars of his Moscow prison where he had been thrown and chained by the terrible Trotzky. The third, not to be outdone by this startling piece of news, would have Lenin with portfolio under his arm walking debonairly down the gang-plank of a Spanish steamer,

landing at Barcelona. Individually the correspondents showed great inventive ingenuity but collectively they failed from lack of teamwork. They proved too much. To flit from Siberia to Moscow and then to Spain in the course of a few hours is more than a human performance. Lenin's detractors endowed him with omnipresence.

Earlier they had given him another attribute of Deity—omnipotence. For they said that Lenin through his coterie had organized the Soviets, and with them he had distilled poison into the minds of 15,000,000 soldiers and disintegrated the army. Then his little group had overthrown the Provisional Government and had led by the nose a nation of 180,000,000 up to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and made them sign it. Such prowess is not of man—it is superhuman.

He also seemed to be possessed of omniscience. There is more than a hint of it in the pitiful plaint of one of the factions pleading

against going to Prinkipo: "We can't meet with Lenin. These Bolsheviks are clever rascals. They know everything in politics and economics, and they can out-talk us." Finally, immortality was his, too. Scores of times Lenin had been shot, yet he still lives. When devotees in the future set out to prove Lenin a god they will find abundant material in the papers of the last two years.

Our own government took a hand in thickening the fog around Lenin by loosing those classics of official stupidity known as the Sisson documents. It was a lunatic attempt to prove that the world's most powerful enemy of Junkerism, the one man who had never let up in his war on Imperialism, was, in fact, the chief promoter of Junkerism and Imperialism—the Kaiser's own hired agent.

Then followed the stories holding Lenin up to the reprobation of mankind as a cruel monster thirsting for the blood of the bourgeoisie, callous to human suffering. On the one hand

the famished Russians were pictured attacking with knives a horse or a dog dropped dead upon the streets, and bearing the smoking flesh away. On the other hand Lenin was pictured as a Mongolian monarch in the Kremlin surrounded by his Chinese mercenaries, living in Asiatic splendor, his fruit-bill alone amounting to more than 2,000 roubles a day.

As some of the truth began to filter through the blockade these stories were too fantastic for even a credulous public and had to be retired.

### *2. Other Misleading Stories About Lenin*

In their place has arisen a second series. They come from the too facile pens of writers like John Spargo and the Princess Radziwill. Some are pure fabrications, others have a basis in fact, but the venom of the writer entirely discolors the portrait. They make a show of being scientific, carrying an air of authority, bristling with "official documents"

and the statements of "revolutionary leaders." The layman, having no way of verifying the facts in the case, accepts these versions as authentic. But again he has been led astray.

For example, take the man Vladimir Burtzev. On his statements John Spargo bases a great part of his *Saturday Evening Post* article on Lenin, while another writer hails Burtzev as "the old-time Revolutionist, the stern, whole-souled leader." Such a eulogy fits Burtzev of the past, but Burtzev like many others, when the Revolution arrived, turned reactionary. So reactionary in fact did he grow, so bitter did he become in his assaults upon the Kerensky government that he was arrested. Some time after the Bolsheviks came into power he was released and he went to Paris breathing out slaughter against his releasers. There he allied himself with the Kolchak crowd and the other reactionary groups carrying on a campaign to destroy the Revolution in Russia. Some of his best friends

regarded him as insane in his onslaughts upon the revolutionary leaders. When Kerensky was the head of the Revolution, Burtzev led a furious attack against men like Verkhovsky, Kerensky's Minister of War. When Lenin became the leader of the Revolution he led an even more venomous attack against Lenin.

In Paris, Burtzev, now blinded by rage, an open champion of Kolchak and Denikin, assembles the literary material for the assault on Lenin. John Spargo enrolls in the mud-slinging brigade and is duly supplied with "facts" and "documents." Consider the long route by which some of these "facts" have come:

It is alleged that Lenin did something which came to the attention of Malinovsky, the *agent provocateur*. Malinovsky related this to Beletzky, the Chief of the Czar's Secret Police, imprisoned in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Beletzky related this to Burtzev, now turned reactionary and im-

prisoned in Peter and Paul. Burtzev goes to Paris and in a mood of rage and bitterness produces something which he said Beletzky told him that Malinovsky told him that Lenin did. Spargo takes this diatribe, rewrites it and offers it to the American public as a true picture of Lenin. And yet along this chain there are at least three whose testimony would be ruled out of court as incompetent witnesses if not plain liars.

No one would take as trustworthy evidence the words of this notorious agent of the Czar. If I were to believe anything that Beletzky said about Lenin I would believe what I got first-hand.

With two other Americans in an Investigation Committee from the Petrograd City Duma, I visited Beletzky in his cell in Peter and Paul in December, 1917. For an hour I listened, while he discoursed on revolutionists he had known. With a sneer in his voice and a leer in his eye he descanted on the

venality of this one and the weakness of that one. Pretending to no ideals himself, he took great delight in pointing out the black and yellow spots upon these idealists supposed to be all white. One after another he besmirched them, telling how this one had taken German money and the other one had proven a coward in a crisis. Then we brought up the name of Lenin. A complete change came over the face of the grizzled old wolf, the sneer went out of his voice, the leer left his eyes. Very quietly he said, "Lenin! A true revolutionist! An honest man!"

### 3. *Authors' Close Acquaintance With Lenin*

To turn from these fanciful stories of Lenin to the shortcomings of the present volume. It is unfinished. It makes no pretense of being a full survey of Lenin and his work. That can be made only in the perspective of history, and Lenin is still making history.

But the glimpse it offers of the man and his work is, it is hoped, not without interest and significance.

It shows Lenin in action, hard at work in the vortex of the Revolution. It records the impression made upon three foreigners who came into close relations with him. They have very distinct advantages over any others who have written about Lenin. Nearly all the writers in the class mentioned above never spoke with Lenin, never heard him, never saw him, never came within a thousand miles of him. They have woven a great part of their stories out of rumor, phantasies and pure fiction.

In this book the three men met Lenin, heard him speak, or talked with him personally week after week through the critical months of the Revolution.

Colonel Raymond Robins, head of the American Red Cross Mission went to Lenin as a diplomat. He probably saw more of Le-

nin than all the foreign diplomats of all the other Allied countries combined.

Arthur Ransome went to Lenin as a journalist. Knowing the language and the people, he had a remarkable background for understanding the Revolution and its leader. He told me that he had performed the not inconsiderable task of reading all of Lenin's numerous volumes.

For myself, I came to Lenin as a Socialist from America. I rode on the same train with him, talked from the same platform, and lived with him in the National Hotel at Moscow for two months. In this book I give a series of contacts I had with him during the Revolution.

Acknowledgment goes to the editors of *Asia* for the use of my article published in their August number. For the right to reproduce Arthur Ransome's material on Lenin I am indebted to B. W. Huebsch. It is but a few pages from that excellent book, "Rus-

sia in 1919." For the right to reproduce Raymond Robins' material I am indebted to Mr. William Hard and to Mr. Carl Hovey, editors of the *Metropolitan*. The significant articles which appeared in that magazine are to be published by Harper & Brothers, under the title "Raymond Robins' Own Story." It is a book that no one who wishes to understand the Russian situation can afford to miss. It is not only of the greatest permanent historic value, but is throughout as vivid, dramatic and as vital in its content as is the sketch of Lenin in this book.

The facts for the outline of Lenin's life were obtained from the archives of the Moscow Okhrana. These archives of the Czar's Secret Police furnish authoritative records of the Russian revolutionists. The account of the execution of Lenin's brother is taken from "Russia's Ruin" by E. H. Wilcox.

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By Albert Rhys Williams

## *1. His Early Days and Education*

The real name of the Premier of Russia is not Nikolai Lenin but Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov. He was born April 10, 1870, in Simbirsk, a province on the great river affectionately referred to by the Russians as the Mother Volga.

In some accounts he is the "son of a peasant"; in others he is the "son of a nobleman." Both statements are correct.

In old Russia a man who became a senior captain in the navy, a colonel in the army or a Councillor of State in the Civil Service au-

tomatically attained the rank of the nobility. Lenin's father came from peasant stock and rose to the position of Councillor of State. So Lenin is referred to as the "son of a peasant" or the "son of a nobleman" according to the animus of the writer. Lenin's mother, Maria Alexandrovna, had a small estate in the Province of Kazan, and after her husband's death was in receipt of a pension.

His father was master in a gymnasium and then inspector of schools. An enthusiast for education, he was everywhere fostering and encouraging intellectual interests. In his five children, three boys and two girls, he met with a wonderful response. Their home became a little university in itself, in which all were devoted to art and music and science and literature. This community of interest begot a warm and close family spirit. All the brothers and sisters were deeply attached to one another and to their parents.

Sensitive to the things of the mind, they

became likewise increasingly sensitive to the sufferings of the great masses. The beauty and interest of their own home life was such a contrast to the dullness and misery of the life of the millions around them groaning under the tyranny of Czardom. The joy in their own liberty was sullied always by the constant spectacle of slavery in the masses. Along with their passion for knowledge they began to develop an increasing passion for the people. One after another they committed themselves to the task of liberation and education of the workers and peasants.

### *2. The Execution of Lenin's Brother*

On May 20, 1886, occurred a tragedy which is said to have made a profound impression on Lenin. His brother Alexander was hanged in the courtyard of the Schlüsselburg Bastile.

This brother was a young man of rare mind

and character. He was a dreamer, a lover of music, often wandering through the woods or drifting in his boat down the Volga. He was also a hard worker and a brilliant student, always at the head of his class and winning the gold medal of the gymnasium.

With his sister Anna he went to the University of St. Petersburgh. There he labored with extraordinary intensity, attending lectures, working in the laboratory, writing an essay on the visual organs of worms, winning a prize in zoology, devouring books on social sciences, drawing up a Party program, translating a work on the philosophy of Marx, organizing societies, agitating among the dock-laborers, helping poor students, even to the pawning of his gold medal. And his regret was that he could work but sixteen hours a day.

All the time his rebellion against the tyranny of the Czar was growing. Outrage after outrage drove him nearer to the camp of the

revolutionists. He organized a procession to pay honors to the grave of the poet Dobroliubov, but it was broken up on the Nevsky by a patrol of Cossacks and many students were arrested. Alexander thereupon joined "The People's Will," an association of terrorists. Their plot upon the Czar was discovered by the secret police and fifteen members were put on trial.

"At his trial," Wilcox says, "Alexander refused legal aid and denied nothing that was said against him. Indeed, his chief desire seemed to be to shield those implicated with him. The Crown Counsel said of him, 'He admits himself guilty of everything, probably of what he did not do as well as what he did.' It is said that by thus taking blame of others on himself, he saved the life of one of his fellow-conspirators. In his speech to the Court he declared his conviction that, in the conditions then existing in Russia, the Terror was the only possible method of political struggle.

When the names of the five condemned to death were read, Alexander Ilyich Ulianov was among them.

"While awaiting execution, his mother was allowed to visit him. The first time she came to see him he flung himself at her feet in tears and implored her to forgive him for the sorrow he had caused her. But he tried to prove to her that a man had higher duties than those that he owed to his parents, and that in Russia one of those duties was to fight for the political emancipation of the whole people. When she objected that his methods were terrible, he replied: 'But what is one to do if there are no others?' His mother entreated him to petition for mercy; but this he steadfastly refused to do, saying that it would be insincere. 'I have tried to kill a human being,' he said, 'and therefore they must kill me.'

"He showed great anxiety that all his outstanding obligations, even the most trifling

ones, should be wiped out before he parted from life. Remembering that he owed an acquaintance thirty roubles, he asked his mother to redeem his gold medal and sell it to satisfy his debt. He also asked her to return to their owners certain borrowed books that were in his keeping. In his efforts to console her he reminded her that she would still have her other children, and especially the boy and girl who came after him and who had both just finished their school courses with as much distinction as he himself. And in this spirit he died on the Schlüsselburg gallows.

"The brother whom Alexander designated as his mother's comforter is the present Premier of Russia, at that time seventeen years of age."

### *3. Lenin as Student, Organizer and Exile in Siberia*

Lenin attended the Simbirsk Gymnasium, whose master was Feodor Kerensky, the father

of Alexander Kerensky, the Minister-President of the Provisional Government. It doubtless never entered the head of this provincial schoolmaster that his own son Alexander Kerensky was to rise to the highest post in all Russia. Nor in his wildest dreams could he have seen that this young member of the Ulianov family, this quiet, serious lad, would some day become Lenin, the man of iron will, the man who was to rise and take the power from his son and with iron nerve guide the destinies of Great Russia against a world of enemies.

After graduating from the Simbirsk Gymnasium Lenin entered the University of Kazan. His career here was short. He was expelled for preaching Socialism and taking part in a student rebellion. Later he was admitted to the bar, but pleaded only one case.

In 1891 he turned from the provinces to the great metropolis upon the Neva. While studying law and economics at the University

of Petersburgh he published a remarkable treatise upon Marxism which immediately established him as an authority. Plekhanov, the Father of Russian Socialism, on reading his manuscript, said, "Some day this young man will be dangerous." That was a prophetic word. About fifteen years later Lenin took the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party from the old veteran's hand and twenty-five years later ousted him from the Great Soviet Congress.

But the Russian authorities right then, in 1891, thought him a very dangerous personage. For from the beginning he was as ardent in life as in theory and plunged deep into the activities of the Socialist movement. Organizing the Union for the Liberation of the Artizan Class, he became a prominent workingmen's leader.

But he took no lead in terrorist plots as had his brother Alexander, but devoted himself to instructing the workers in politics and eco-

nomics. But to the Czar any champion of the people was perforce an enemy of the government. Its heavy fist at last came down on Lenin. He was arrested, and by Imperial ukase, on January 29, 1897, was exiled to Eastern Siberia.

With thousands of others, bravest and best of the children of Russia, he took the long trail that reaches out across the vast wastes of Asia. However, he did not let Siberia mean to him simply silence, snow and stagnation. It meant to him a rich opportunity to think and to study. In the village of Sushenskoy he gave himself to incessant work with brain and pen. Out of this came numerous works which appeared over the names of "Ilyich," "Ilin," "Tylin" and "Lenin."

### 5. *A Propagandist and Organizer in Europe*

On the expiration of his sentence he was forbidden to reside in any of the large cities,

factory centers or university towns of Russia. So he slipped away from Russia and began his new career in Western Europe. With Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod and Zasulich, he founded the paper *Iskra,* which soon became the active center for all the Russian Socialists in exile. In this circle of ardent revolutionists Lenin developed his organizing ability. To this center came all the young people who wished to study to fit themselves for the work of liberation. From this center went out all the propaganda for the transformation of Russia.

Tracked by all the European police in the service of the Okhrana, Lenin lived successively in Munich, Brussels, Paris, London and Geneva, which he made his permanent home. His wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, was secretary of the Party. She almost ruined her health by the exhausting work of copying messages in cipher, all written out in invisible chemical ink.

### *6. Lenin Becomes Leader of the Bolsheviks*

The Russian Social-Democratic Party was organized in 1898. At the Second Congress held at Brussels and London in 1903 came the famous breach in the Party. Lenin fought for a centralized party with a central body directing all activities. On this and other points he was bitterly opposed by a determined minority. Agreement was impossible, and the congress split into two factions: the Mensheviki, which means literally "members of the minority," and the Bolsheviki, "members of the majority." (It must be remembered that to-day there is no such party in Russia as a Bolshevik party. In 1918 the name of the party was officially changed to Communist. In this book the two names are used interchangeably.)

Lenin became the leader of the Bolsheviks. All the old-time celebrities, including Plekhanov, voted with him. Afterwards they went

over to the Mensheviks and became his antagonists. Although alone in a strange land, without a paper, with no means of action, Lenin did not lose courage. He published a book called "Economic Studies," which had a large success in Russia. With the money which this book brought him and with the help of Lunacharsky, Bogdanov and Vorovsky he founded a new paper, *Forward*.

At the congress of 1904, when the revolutionary movement was re-awakening in Russia, Lenin introduced all the questions which he was to solve later as chief of the Soviet government—dictatorship of the proletariat, confiscation of capitalist property, the development of revolutionary action even to its extreme limits, preparation of the Russian Revolution as a prelude to the International Socialist Revolution.

In 1905, when the first Russian Revolution broke out, Lenin, receiving amnesty, returned to his country. When the forces of reaction

were again in the saddle he fled to Finland (1906), then to Switzerland (1907), and to Paris (1908). He brought out two papers, *The Social Democrat,* a propaganda paper, and *The Proletariat,* a more theoretical journal. He settled with his co-workers at Cracow, near the Russian frontier, where he could keep in touch with the revolutionists and direct their movements.

### 7. *Lenin As a Scholar and Author*

Besides these propaganda activities Lenin did a man's work in many other fields. Wilcox, the English writer, says of him, "Like Karl Marx, he was never happier than when exploring the treasures of the British Museum. This institution, one of his friends has told us, he regarded with enthusiastic admiration. His eyes always shone when he spoke of it, and it was his fondest dream to live near it. It was here that he found his favorite recreation."

He made an excellent translation of Sidney and Beatrice Webb's "Industrial Democracy." His own original works may be numbered by the score. The following are important:

*"Development of Capitalism in Russia," "Economic Sketches and Essays," "What Is To Be done? The Painful Problems of Our Movement," "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward: The Crisis in Our Party," "Twelve Years: Two Trends in Russian Marxism; The Agrarian Problem," "Materialism and Empirocriticism: Critical Remarks to a Reactionary Philosophy," "Imperialism as the Last Stage of Capitalism," "The State and Revolution."*

Unfortunately at the present time there are very few translations of Lenin's works in English. A number of his recent speeches and papers have been gathered into a well-edited volume, entitled *"The Proletarian Revolution,"* published by The Communist

Press, New York. A pamphlet called *"The Soviets at Work,"* published by the Rand School, New York, gives an insight into the constructive genius of Lenin's mind.

### *8. His Return to Russia Through Germany*

The outbreak of the great war found Lenin in Austria trying to stir the workers to rebellion. He was imprisoned but released, thanks to the action of the French Socialists. He returned to Switzerland, and there took up the fight for peace and the International. He took a very active part in the organization of the Zimmerwald Conference. In April–May, 1917, after the fall of Czarism, he wished to return to Russia. The Allied governments opposed this. He then accepted the proposals of the Swiss Socialist Party. The Federal Councillor Platen and others made the necessary plans, and he was allowed to pass through Germany accompanied by one hundred revo-

lutionists of all factions. This fact has been cited as proof that the Bolsheviks were German agents. It should be remembered that in this same train went scores of Socialist Revolutionists and Mensheviks, notably Axelrod and Martov, the bitter opponents of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. On his arrival at Petrograd, the people, the army and the navy gave him a triumphal reception.

From that time the story of Lenin blends with that of the Russian Revolution itself.

# TEN MONTHS WITH LENIN

# TEN MONTHS WITH LENIN

By Albert Rhys Williams

## *1. Young Disciples of Lenin*

I saw Lenin first not in the flesh but in the minds and spirits of five young Russian workingmen. They were part of the great tide of exiles flowing back into Petrograd in the summer of 1917.

Americans were drawn to them by their energy, intelligence and their knowledge of English. They soon informed us that they were Bolsheviks. "They certainly don't look it," said an American. For a time he would not believe it. He had seen in the paper the picture of the Bolsheviks as long-bearded,

ignorant, indolent ruffians. And these men were clean-shaven, polite, humorous, amiable and alert. They were not afraid of responsibility, not afraid to die, and most marvellous of all in Russia, not afraid to work. And they were Bolsheviks.

Woskov hailed from New York, where he had been the organizer of the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union, Number 1008. Yanishev, a mechanic, the son of a village priest, bore on his body the marks of labor in mines and mills all around the world. Niebut, an artizan, always carried a pack of books and was always enthusiastic over his latest find. Volodarsky, working day and night like a galley slave, said to me a few weeks before he was assassinated, "Oh, what of it! Supposing they do get me! I have had more joy working these last six months than any five men ought to have in all their lives." Peters, a foreman, who later appeared in the press reports as a bloody tyrant signing death-warrants until his fingers

could no longer hold the pen, was often sighing for his English rose-garden and the poems of Nekrasov.

These men quietly assured us that, in brains and character, Lenin led not only all the Bolsheviks, but everybody else in Russia, in Europe and in all the world.

For us who daily read in the papers of Lenin, the German agent, and daily heard the bourgeoisie outlaw him as a scoundrel, a traitor, and an imbecile, this was indeed strange doctrine. It sounded fantastic and fanatical. But these men were neither fools nor sentimentalists. Knocking about the world had hammered all that out of them. Nor were these men hero-worshippers. The Bolshevik movement was elemental and passionate, but it was scientific, realistic, and uncongenial to hero-worship. Yet here was this quintette of Bolsheviks declaring that there was one Russian, great in integrity and in intelligence, and his name was Nikolai Lenin, at that time an

outlaw hunted by the Provisional Government.

The more we saw of these young zealots the more we desired to see the man they acknowledged as their master. Would they take us to his hiding-place?

"Wait a little while," they would reply, laughing, "then you shall see him."

Impatiently we waited through the summer and into the fall of 1917, watching the Kerensky Government grow weaker and weaker. On November 7 the Bolsheviks pronounced it dead and at the same time proclaimed Russia to be a Republic of Soviets with Lenin as its Premier.

## 2. *First Impression of Lenin*

While a tumultuous, singing throng of peasants and soldiers, flushed with the triumph of their revolution, jammed the great hall at Smolny, while the guns of the *Aurora* were

heralding the death of the old order and the birth of the new, Lenin quietly stepped upon the tribunal and the Chairman announced, "Comrade Lenin will now address the Congress."

We strained to see whether he would meet our image of him, but from our seats at the reporters' table he was at first invisible. Amidst loud cries, cheers, whistles and stamping of feet he crossed the platform, the demonstration rising to a climax as he stepped upon the speaker's rostrum, not more than thirty feet away. Now we saw him clearly and our hearts fell.

He was almost the opposite of what we had pictured him. Instead of looming up large and impressive he appeared short and stocky. His beard and hair were rough and unkempt.

After stilling the tornado of applause he said, "Comrades, we shall now take up the formation of the Socialist State." Then he

went into an unimpassioned, matter-of-fact discussion. In his voice there was a harsh, dry note rather than eloquence. Thrusting his thumbs in his vest at the arm-pits, he rocked back and forth on his heels. For an hour we listened, hoping to discern the hidden magnetic qualities which would account for his hold on these free, young, sturdy spirits. But in vain.

We were disappointed. The Bolsheviks by their sweep and daring had captured our imaginations; we expected their leader to do likewise. We wanted the head of this party to come before us, the embodiment of these qualities, an epitome of the whole movement, a sort of super-Bolshevik. Instead of that, there he was, looking like a Menshevik, and a very small one at that.

"If he were spruced up a bit you would take him for a bourgeois mayor or banker of a small French city," whispered Julius West, the English correspondent.

"Yes, a rather little man for a rather big job," drawled his companion.

We knew how heavy was the burden that the Bolsheviks had taken up. Would they be able to carry it? At the outset, their leader did not strike us as a strong man.

So much for a first impression. Yet, starting from that first adverse estimate, I found myself six months later in the camp of Woskov, Niebut, Peters, Volodarsky and Yanishev, to whom the first man and statesman of Europe was Nikolai Lenin.

### *3. Lenin Injects Iron Discipline into the State Life*

On November 9th I desired a pass to accompany the Red Guards then streaming out along all roads to fight the Cossacks and the counter-revolutionists. I presented my credentials bearing the signature of Hillquit and Huysmans. I thought they were a very im-

posing set of credentials. But Lenin didn't. Quite as if they came from the Union League Club, he handed them back with a laconic, "No."

This was a trivial incident, but indicative of a new, rigorous attitude now appearing in the councils of the proletarians. Hitherto, to their own destruction, the masses had been indulging their excessive amiability and good nature. Lenin set out for discipline. He knew that only strong, stern action could save the Revolution, menaced by hunger, invasion and reaction. So the Bolsheviks drove their measures through without ruth or hesitation, while their enemies ransacked the arsenals of invective for epithets to assail them. To the bourgeoisie Lenin was the high-handed, iron-fisted one. At this period they referred to him not as Premier Lenin, but as "the Tyrant Lenin," "Lenin the Dictator." And the Right Socialists said, the old Romanov Tsar, Nicholas II, has given place to the new Tsar, Niko-

lai Lenin, and in derision shouted, "Long live our new Tsar Nicholas III!"

They seized with joy upon the humorous incident of the peasant. It was the night when the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, throwing its support to the new Soviet government, celebrated with a glorified love-feast in the halls of Smolny. The intelligentzia had spoken for the village; there was a demand that the village should speak for itself. An old fellow in peasant's smock came to the platform. His face showed rosy through his white beard; he had twinkling eyes, and spoke in the village dialect.

"*Tovarishchi,* how happy I was tonight as we came here with banners flying and music playing. I didn't come walking on the ground. I came flying through the air. I am one of the dark people, living in a dark village. You gave us the light. But we don't understand it all, so they sent me here to find out. But, *Tovarishchi,* we are all very happy

over the wonderful change. In the old days the *chinovniki* used to be very hard and beat us, but now they are very polite. In the old days we could only look at the outsides of the palaces, now we can walk right inside them. In the old days we only talked about the Tsar, but they tell us now, *Tovarishchi,* tomorrow I can shake hands with Tsar Lenin himself. God grant him long life!"

The audience exploded. Astounded at the roars of laughter and applause, the old peasant sat down. But the next day he was presented to Lenin, and later was the peasants' representative at Brest-Litovsk.

During these chaotic weeks only iron will and iron nerve would suffice. Rigid order and discipline were evident in all departments. One could note the stiffening of the morale of the workingman, a tightening up of the loose parts in the Soviet machinery. Now when the Soviet moved out into action, as for example in the seizure of the banking sys-

tem, it struck hard and effectively. Lenin knew where to be precipitate in action, but he knew also where to go slow. A delegation of workingmen came to Lenin asking him if he could decree the nationalization of their factory.

"Yes," said Lenin, picking up a blank form, "it is a very simple thing, my part of it. All I have to do is to take these blanks and fill in the name of your factory in this space here, and then sign my name in this space here, and the name of the commissar here." The workmen were highly gratified and pronounced it "very good."

"But before I sign this blank," resumed Lenin, "I must ask you a few questions. First, do you know where to get the raw materials for your factory?" Reluctantly they admitted they didn't.

"Do you understand the keeping of accounts," resumed Lenin, "and have you worked out a method for keeping up produc-

tion?" The workmen said they were afraid they did not know very much about these minor matters.

"And finally, comrades," continued Lenin, "may I ask you whether you have found a market in which to sell your products?"

Again they answered, "No."

"Well, comrades," said the Premier, "don't you think you are not ready to take over your factory now? Go back home and work over these matters. You will find it hard; you will make many blunders, but you will learn. Then come back in a few months and we can take up the nationalizing of your factory."

### *4. Iron Discipline in Lenin's Personal Life*

The same iron that Lenin was injecting into the social life he showed in his individual life. *Shchi* and *borshch,* slabs of black bread, tea and porridge made up the fare of the Smolny crowds. It was likewise the usual fare of Lenin, his wife and sister. For twelve

and fifteen hours a day the revolutionists stuck to their posts. Eighteen and twenty hours was the regular stint for Lenin. In his own hand he wrote hundreds of letters. Immersed in his work, he was dead to everything, even his own sustenance. Grasping her opportunity when Lenin was engaged in conversation his wife would appear with a glass of tea, saying, "Here, *tovarishch,* you must not forget to drink this." Often the tea was sugarless, for Lenin went on the same ration as the rest of the population. The soldiers and messengers slept on iron cots in the big, bare, barrack-like rooms. So did Lenin and his wife. Wearied, they flung themselves down on their rough couches, oftentimes without undressing, ready to rise to any emergency. Lenin did not take upon himself these privations out of any ascetic impulses. He was simply putting into practise the first principle of Communism.

One of these principles was that the pay

of any Communist official should be no larger than the pay of an average workingman. It was fixed at a maximum of 600 rubles a month. Later there was an increase. As it is to-day, the Premier of Russia receives less than $200 a month.

I was in the National Hotel when Lenin took a room on the second floor. The first act of the new Soviet régime was the abolition of the elaborate and expensive menus. The many dishes that comprised a meal were cut down to two. One could have soup and meat or soup and *kasha*. And that is all that anyone, whether Chief Commissar or kitchen-boy, could have, for it is written in the creed of the Communists that "No one shall have cake until everybody has bread." On some days there was very little even of bread for the people. Still each person got just as much as Lenin. Occasionally there were days without any bread at all. Those days, too, were breadless days for him.

When Lenin was near death in the days following the attempt upon his life, the physicians prescribed some food not obtainable on the regular food-card and which could be bought only in the market from some speculator. In spite of all the entreaties of his friends, he refused to touch anything which was not part of the legitimate ration.

Later when Lenin was convalescing his wife and sister hit upon a scheme for increasing his nutriment. Finding that he kept his bread in a drawer, in his absence they slipped into his room and now and then added a piece to his store. Absorbed in his work, Lenin would reach into the drawer and take a bit, which he ate quite unconscious that it was any addition to the regular ration.

In a letter to the workers of Europe and America, Lenin wrote: "Never have the Russian masses suffered such depths of misery, such pangs of hunger as those to which they are now condemned by the military in-

tervention of the Entente!" But these same sufferings Lenin was enduring along with the masses about whom he writes.

Lenin has been accused of gambling with the life of a great nation, an experimentalist recklessly trying out his communistic formulas upon the sick body of Russia. But he cannot be accused of lack of faith in those formulas. He not only tries them on Russia. He tries them on himself. He is willing to take his own medicine. To pay homage to the doctrines of Communism from a distance is one thing. To endure, as does Lenin, the privations and rigors that the introduction of Communism entails on the spot is a vastly different thing.

Starting a communistic state should not, however, be portrayed entirely in sombre colors. In the darkest days in Russia, art and the opera flourished. Romance, too, played its part. It touched even the chief characters of the revolutionary stage. We were as-

tounded to find one morning that the versatile Kollontay had married the sailor Dybenko. Later, for ordering a retreat before the Germans at Narva, he came under censure. In disgrace he was expelled from office and party, Lenin approving and Kollontay naturally resentful.

Talking with her at this juncture I suggested that Lenin might have gone the way of all flesh, the poison of power entering his veins and inflating his ego. "Bitter as I feel now," she answered, "I couldn't think of imputing any action of his to personal motives. No one of the comrades who had worked with Comrade Lenin for ten years could believe that there was a single drop of selfishness in him."

### *5. Practise of Communism Rallies the People to the Soviet*

Lenin was of course pictured in the bourgeois press as the opposite of this. A fiend

incarnate, a selfish, grasping monster. But gradually the real Lenin emerged from this shroud of lies. And as the news spread through Russia that Lenin and his colleagues were taking pot-luck with the people, the masses rallied around them.

The miner in the Urals, inclined to grumble at his meagre ration, remembers that each one draws alike from the common store of food and clothes and shelter. Why, then, should he grumble at his morsel of black bread? At any rate it is as large as Lenin's. The rankling pangs of injustice are not added to the pangs of hunger.

The peasant wife shivering in the icy blasts that sweep off the Volga knows little of the man who has taken the place of the Czar. But she hears that he often has an unheated room. Now though she suffers from the cold she does not suffer from the inequalities of life.

The engineer at Nizhni, finding the six

hundred rubles in the pay-envelope woefully inadequate to cover the needs of his family, begins to be bitter. Then he recollects that the man in the Kremlin draws no more. That helps to take the rancor away.

The Soviet soldier facing the drum-fire of the Allied guns knows that Lenin is also on the firing line though he is in the rear. For danger, like everything else in Russia, has been socialized. No one is immune from it. The percentage of Soviet leaders killed and wounded at the front. Uritzky, Volardsky percentage of Soviet soldiers killed and wounded at the front. Uritsky, Voladarsky and scores of others have been assassinated while Lenin's body has twice stopped the assassin's bullets. To the Red Soldier Lenin then is not someone aloof from the fray, but a comrade-in-arms sharing the risks and hardships of the campaign.

The American Mission to Russia report by Bullitt says:

"Lenin today is regarded as almost a prophet. His picture, usually accompanied by Karl Marx's, hangs everywhere. When I called on Lenin at the Kremlin I had to wait a few minutes until a delegation of peasants left his room. They had heard in their village that Comrade Lenin was hungry. And they had come hundreds of miles carrying eight hundred *puds* of bread as the gift of the village to Lenin. Just before them was another delegation of peasants to whom the report had come that Comrade Lenin was working in an unheated room. They came bearing a stove and enough firewood to heat it for three months. Lenin is the only leader who receives such gifts. And he turns them into the common fund."

Sharing alike in the common wealth and the common dearth created a common bond of sympathy running from Premier to poorest peasant, bringing to the Soviet leaders the increasing support of the people.

### *6. Practice of Communism Gives Lenin the Pulse of the People*

Living so close to the people, the Communist leaders knew the ebb and flow of popular feeling.

Lenin did not need to send out a commission to discover the sentiments and psychology of the people. A man going without food doesn't have to speculate upon the mood of a hungry man. He knows. Hungering with the people, freezing with the people, Lenin was feeling their feelings, thinking their thoughts, and voicing their desires.

Now this is precisely the way in which the Communist Party claims to function—as an instrument directly reflecting the thoughts of the masses and as a mouthpiece articulating them.'

The Communists say: "We did not create the Soviets. They sprang out of the life of the people. We did not hatch up some

program in our brains and then take it out and superimpose it upon the people. Rather we took our program directly from the people themselves. They were demanding 'Land to the Peasants,' 'Factories to the Workers,' and 'Peace to All the World.' We wrote these slogans upon our banners and with them marched into power. Our strength lies in our understanding of the people. In fact, we do not need to understand the people. We are the people." This was certainly true of the rank and file of the leaders, who, like the five young Communists we first met in Petrograd, were flesh and bone of the people.

But intellectuals like Lenin—how can they speak for the people? How can they understand the hearts and minds of the masses? The answer is that they never can. That is certain. But it is equally certain, as Tolstoy showed, that he who lives the life of the people gets closer than he who holds himself

aloof from their struggles. So Lenin had one great advantage over his opponents. He did not have to guess about the feelings of the Ural miner, the Volga peasant or the Soviet soldier. He knew them, approximately, at any rate. For their experiences were his experiences. So while his opponents were fumbling in the dark, Lenin drove ahead with the assurance of the man who knows his ground.

This practice of communism by the Soviet leaders is one of the powerful factors in rallying strength to the Soviet government. Outside Russia this fact has been passed over, or it has been minimized. Lenin, however, did not minimize it. He held it to be essential in the Soviet system. In the vortex of events he took time to write, in the "State and Revolution," an exposition upon the practice of communism as the true road for proletarian statesmen to take. It is a hard road. There are few that follow in it.

### 7. *Lenin in Public Address*

Despite these rigors and the drain of this day and night ordeal, Lenin appeared constantly upon the platform, concise, alert, diagnosing the conditions, prescribing the remedies, and sending his listeners into action to administer them. Observers have wondered at the enthusiasm which Lenin's addresses roused in the uneducated class. While his speeches were swift and fluent and crowded with facts, they were generally as unpicturesque and unromantic as his platform appearance. They demanded sustained thought and were just the opposite of Kerensky's. Kerensky was a romantic figure, an eloquent orator, with all those arts and passions which should have swayed, one would think, "the ignorant and illiterate Russians." But they were not swayed by him. Here is another Russian anomaly. The masses listened to the flashing sentences and magnificent periods of this bril-

liant platform orator. Then they turned around and gave their allegiance to Lenin, the scholar, the man of logic, of measured thought and academic utterance.

Lenin is a master of dialectics and polemics, aggravatingly self-possessed in debate. And in debate he is at his best. Olgin says: "Lenin does not reply to an opponent. He vivisects him. He is as keen as the edge of a razor. His mind works with an amazing acuteness. He notices every flaw in the line of argument. He disagrees with, and he draws the most absurd conclusions from, premises unacceptable to him. At the same time he is derisive. He ridicules his opponent. He castigates him. He makes you feel that his victim is an ignoramus, a fool, a presumptuous nonentity. You are swept by the power of his logic. You are overwhelmed by his intellectual passion."

Occasionally he relieves the march of his argument by a bit of humor or a stinging re-

tort as: "Comrade Karellin's queries remind me of the adage, 'One fool can ask more questions than ten wise men can answer.'" Again, when Radek, the Bolshevik journalist, turned once on Lenin saying, "If there were five hundred brave men in Petrograd we would send you to jail," Lenin quietly replied, "Some comrades indeed may go to jail, but if you will calculate the probabilities you will see that it is more likely that I will send you than you me." Occasionally he would bring in a homely incident illustrating the new order: the old peasant woman gathering firewood in the landlord's forest with the soldier of the new day acting as her protector instead of her persecutor.

Under suffering and the stress of events the fire and passion which lies in the man seemed to have broken through the usual reserve. A recent observer says that in a great meeting Lenin began with sentences somewhat halting and heavy, but as he got under way he spoke

more clearly. He became fluent and vivacious, without much external effort but with an increasing internal agitation that was more and more effective. "A sort of controlled pathos pervaded his soul. He used many gestures and kept walking a few steps backward and forward. Remarkably deep and irregular wrinkles formed upon his brow, giving evidence of an intensive pondering, an almost tormenting labor of intellect." Lenin aimed primarily at the intellect, not at the emotions. Yet in the response of his audience one could see the emotional power of sheer intellectuality.

Only once did I see him miss fire. That was at the Mikhailovsky Manège, in December, when the first detachment of the new Red Army was leaving for the front. Flaring torches lit up the vast interior, turning the long lines of armoured cars into a group of strange primeval monsters. Swarming through the great arena and clambering over

the cars were the dark figures of the new recruits, poorly equipped in arms, but strong in revolutionary ardor. To keep warm they danced and stamped their feet and to keep good cheer they sang their revolutionary hymns and the folksongs of the villages.

A great shout announced the arrival of Lenin. He mounted one of the big cars and began speaking. In the half darkness the throngs looked up and listened attentively. But they did not kindle to his words. He finished amidst an applause that was far from the customary ovation. His speech that day was too casual to meet the mood of men going out to die. The ideas were commonplace and the expressions trite. There was reason enough for this deadness—overwork, preoccupation. But the fact remained. Lenin had met a significant occasion with an insignificant speech. And these workmen felt it. The Russian proletarians are not blind hero-worshippers. One cannot long capitalize

one's past exploits and prestige, as the Grandfather and the Grandmother of the Revolution discovered. If one did not acquit oneself like a hero now, one did not get the hero's meed of plaudits.

When Lenin stepped down, Podvoisky announced, "An American comrade to address you." The crowd pricked up its ears and I climbed upon the big car.

"Oh, good. You speak in English," said Lenin. "Allow me to be your interpreter."

"No, I shall speak in Russian," I answered, prompted by some reckless impulse.

Lenin watched me with eyes twinkling, as if anticipating entertainment. It was not long in coming. After using up the first run of predigested sentences that I always carried in stock, I hesitated, and stopped. I had difficulty in getting the language started up again. No matter what a foreigner does to their tongue, the Russians are polite and charitable. They appreciate the novice's effort, if not his

technic. So my speech was punctured with long periods of applause which gave me each time a breathing spell in which to assemble more words for another short advance. I wanted to tell them that if a great crisis came I should myself be glad to enlist in the ranks of the Red Army. I paused, fumbling for a word. Lenin looked up and asked, "What word do you want?" "Enlist," I answered. *"Vstupit,"* he prompted.

Thereafter, whenever I was stuck, he would fling the word up to me and I would catch it and hurl it out into the audience, modified, of course, by my American accent. This, and the fact that I stood there in the flesh, a tangible symbol of the internationalism they had heard so much about, raised storms of laughter and thundering applause. In this Lenin joined heartily.

"Well, that's a beginning in Russian, at any rate," he said. "But you must keep at it hard. And you," he said, turning to Bessie

Beatty, "you must learn Russian, too. Put an advertisement in the paper asking for exchange lessons. Then just read, write and talk nothing but Russian. Don't talk with Americans—it won't do you any good, anyhow," he added humorously. "Next time I see you I'll give you an examination."

### *8. Lenin's Constant Exposure to Danger*

It very nearly came about that there was no next time. As the automobile with Lenin in it swung out of the Manège, there were three sharp reports and three bullets crashed through his car, one of them wounding Platten, the Swiss delegate, who sat in the seat with Lenin. Some assassin up a side street had tried and failed.

The Bolshevik leaders were, of course, in constant danger of their lives. The chief object of attention on the part of the bourgeois plotters was naturally Lenin. In his active

brain, they said, were wrought the plans for their undoing. Oh, for a bullet to still that brain! That was the prayer that every day fervently went up from the altars of the counter-revolutionary homes.

In such a home in Moscow we were always welcomed with a lavish hospitality. The great table with its steaming samovar was loaded with fruits and nuts, a bewildering array of *zakuska,* and what Arthur Ransome called "sweets," his particular failing. The war had done very handsomely by this household. Speculation in all its branches, running goods by the underground route to Germany, and profiteering, grand and petty, had put this family upon the roof garden. Now suddenly out of the darkness, knocking away the very foundations of the roof garden, came the Bolsheviks. They wanted to put a stop to the war. There was no reasoning with them. Wild, insane fellows! They wanted to put a stop to everything, to speculation, to profiteer-

ing, to everything! The only thing to do was to put a stop to them. String them up! Shoot them down! Begin at the top with Lenin.

"I have a million roubles this minute for the man who will kill Lenin," this rising young Moscow speculator informed me gravely, "and there are nineteen other men whom I can place my hands upon tomorrow, each with a million more for the cause."

We asked our Bolshevik quintette whether Lenin was aware of the risk he was running. "Yes, he is quite aware of it," they said. "But he doesn't worry. You see, nothing really worries him." And apparently nothing did.

Along a path beset with mines and pitfalls he walked with the composure of a country gentleman, while crises that shook men's nerves and blanched their faces found him cool and unruffled. Plan after plan of the counter-revolutionists and foreign imperialists to assassinate Lenin miscarried. But on

the last of August, 1918, the plotters almost succeeded.

The Premier had finished his address to the 15,000 workmen at the Mikhelson Works. As he was returning to his car, a girl ran out holding a paper as if presenting a petition to the Premier. He reached out to take it and as he did so another girl, Dora Kaplan, fired three shots at him, two of them taking effect and stretching him out upon the pavement. He was lifted into his car and driven to the Kremlin. While bleeding profusely from his wounds he insisted upon walking up the steps. He was wounded more seriously than he thought. For weeks he was close to death. The strength left from fighting the fever in his veins he gave to fighting the fever of revenge that ran through the country.

For the masses, enraged that the dark forces of reaction had struck down the man who stood as the symbol of all their liberties and aspirations, struck back at the bourgeoisie

and at the monarchists with the Red Terror.

Many of the bourgeoisie had to pay with their lives for the assassinations of the commissars and the attempt upon Lenin. So fierce was the wrath of the people that hundreds more would have perished had not Lenin pleaded with the people to restrain their fury. Through all the furor it is safe to say that he was the calmest man in Russia.

### *9. Lenin's Extraordinary Self-Composure*

On all occasions he maintained the most perfect self-control. Events that stirred others to a frenzy were an invitation to quiet and serenity in him.

The one historic session of the Constituent Assembly was a turbulent scene as the two factions came to death-grips with each other. The delegates, shouting battle-cries and beating on the desks, the orators, thundering out threats and challenges, and two thousand

voices, passionately singing the International and the Revolutionary march, charged the atmosphere with electricity. As the night advanced one felt the voltage of the place going up and up. In the galleries we gripped the rails, jaws set and nerves on edge. Lenin sat in a front tier box, looking bored.

At last he rose, and walking to the back of the tribunal he stretched himself upon the red carpeted stairs. He glanced casually around the vast concourse. Then as if saying, "So many people wasting nervous force. Well, here's one who is going to store some up," he propped his head on his hand and went to sleep. The eloquence of the orators and the roar of the audience rolled above his head, but peacefully he slumbered on. Once or twice, opening his eyes, he blinked about him, and nodded off again.

Finally, rising, he stretched himself and strolled leisurely down to his place in the front tier box. Seeing our opening, Reed and

I slipped down to question him about the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. He replied indifferently. He asked about the activities of the Propaganda Bureau. His face brightened up as we told him how the material was being printed by tons, that it was really getting across the trenches into the German army. But we found it hard to work in the German language.

"Ah!" he said with sudden animation, as he recalled my exploits on the armored car, "and how goes the Russian language? Can you understand all these speeches now?"

"There are so many words in Russian," I replied evasively. "That's it," he retorted. "You must go at it systematically. You must break the backbone of the language at the outset. I'll tell you my method of going at it."

In essence, Lenin's system was this: First, learn all the nouns, learn all the verbs, learn all the adverbs and adjectives, learn all the rest of the words; learn all the grammar and

rules of syntax, then keep practicing everywhere and upon everybody. As may be seen, Lenin's system was more thorough-going than subtle. It was, in short, his system of the conquest of the bourgeoisie applied to the conquest of a language, a merciless application to the job. But he was quite exercised over it.

He leaned over the box, with sparkling eyes, and drove his words home with gestures. Our fellow reporters looked on enviously. They thought that Lenin was violently excoriating the crimes of the opposition, or divulging the secret plans of the Soviet, or spurring us to greater zeal for the Revolution. In a crisis like this, surely only such themes could draw forth this burst of energy from the head of the Great Russian state. But they were wrong. The Premier of Russia was merely giving an exposition on how to learn a foreign language and was enjoying the diversion of a little friendly conversation.

In the tension of great debates, when his opponents were lashing him unmercifully, Lenin would sit in serene composure, even extracting humor from the situation. After his address at the Fourth Congress, he took his seat upon the tribunal to listen to the assaults of his five opponents. Whenever he thought that the point scored against him was good, Lenin would smile broadly, joining in the applause. Whenever he thought it was ridiculous, Lenin, smiling ironically, would give a mock applause, striking his thumb-nails together.

### *10. Lenin's Manner in Private Address*

Only once did I see evidence of weariness in him. After a midnight meeting of the Soviet, he stepped into the elevator of the National Hotel with his wife and sister. "Good evening," he said, rather wearily. "No," he added, "it's good morning. I've

been talking all day and night, and I'm tired. I'm riding the elevator though it is but one flight up."

Only once did I ever see him hurried or rushed. That was in February, when the Tauride palace was again the scene of a fevered conflict—the debate over war or peace with Germany. Suddenly he appeared, and with quick, vigorous stride was fairly hurtling himself down the long hall toward the platform entrance. Professor Charles Kuntz and I were lying in wait for him, and hailed him with "Just a minute, *Tovarishch* Lenin."

He checked his headlong flight and came to attention in almost military fashion, bowed very gravely, and said, "Will you be so good as to let me go this time, comrades? I haven't even as much as a second. They are awaiting me inside the hall. I beg you to excuse me this time, please." With another bow and a handshake he was off in full stride again.

Wilcox, an anti-Bolshevik, commenting on the amenity of Lenin in intimate relationships, says that an English merchant, in order to rescue his family from a critical situation, went to seek Lenin's personal aid. He was astonished to find the "blood-thirsty tyrant" a mild-mannered man, courteous and sympathetic in bearing, and almost eager to afford all assistance in his power.

In fact, at times he seemed over-courteous, exaggeratedly so. This may have been due to his use of English, lifting bodily from the books the elaborate forms of polite conversation. More probably, it was part of his technic in social intercourse, for Lenin was highly efficient here as elsewhere. He refused to squander his time upon non-essential persons; he was not easily accessible. In his ante-room is this notice:

"Visitors are asked to take into consideration that they are to speak to a man whose business is enormous. He asks them to ex-

plain clearly and briefly what they have come to say."

It was hard to get at Lenin, but once you did you had all there was of him. All his faculties were focused upon you in a manner so acute as to be embarrassing. After a polite, almost an effusive, greeting, he drew up closer until his face would be no more than a foot away. As the conversation went on he often came still closer, gazing into your eyes as if he were searching out the inmost recesses of your brain and peering into your very soul. Only an extraordinarily brazen liar like Malinovsky could withstand the steady impact of that gaze.

We often met a certain Socialist who in 1905 had taken part in the Moscow uprising and had even fought well on the barricades. A career and the comforts of life had weaned him from his first ardent devotion. He wore now an air of prosperity, acting as correspondent for an English newspaper syndicate and

Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo*. Bourgeois writers were regarded by Lenin as wasters of time; but by playing up his past revolutionary record this man had managed to secure an appointment with Lenin. He was in high spirits as he went away to meet it. Some hours later I saw him in a state of perturbation. He explained:

"When I walked into the office I referred to my part in the 1905 revolution. Lenin came up to me and said, 'Yes, comrade, but what are you doing for *this* revolution?' His face was not more than six inches away and his eyes were looking straight into mine. I spoke of my old days on the Moscow barricades, and took a step backwards. But Lenin took a step forward, not letting go my eyes, and said again, 'Yes, comrade, but what are you doing for *this* revolution?' It was like an X-ray—as if he saw all my deeds of the last ten years. I couldn't stand it. I had to look down like a guilty child. I tried to talk, but

it was no use. I had to come away." A few days later this man threw in his lot with *this* revolution and became a worker for the Soviet.

### *11. Lenin's Sincerity and Hatred of Unreality*

One of the secrets of Lenin's power is his terrible sincerity. He was sincere with his friends. He was gratified, of course, with each accession to the ranks, but he would not enlist a single recruit by painting in roseate hues the conditions of service, or the future prospects. Rather he tended to paint things blacker than they were. The burden of many of Lenin's speeches was: "The goal the Bolsheviks are striving for is far away—further away than most of you dream. We have led Russia along a rough road, but the course we follow will bring us more enemies, more hunger. Difficult as the past has been, the

future promises harder things—harder than you imagine." Not an alluring promise. Not the usual call to arms! Yet as the Italians rallied to Garibaldi, who came offering wounds, prison and death, the Russians rallied to Lenin. This was a little discomforting to one expecting the leader to glorify his cause and to urge the prospective convert into joining it. He left the urge to come from within.

Lenin is sincere even with his avowed enemies. An Englishman, commenting on his extraordinary frankness, says his attitude was like this: "Personally, I have nothing against you. Politically, however, you are my enemy and I must use every weapon I can think of for your destruction. Your government does the same against me. Now let us see how far we can go along together."

This stamp of sincerity is on all his public utterances. Lenin is lacking in the usual outfit of the statesman-politician—bluff, glittering verbiage and success-psychology. One

felt that he could not fool others even if he desired to. And for the same reasons that he could not fool himself: His scientific attitude of mind, his passion for the facts.

His lines of information ran out in every direction, bringing him multitudes of facts. These he weighed, sifted and assayed. Then he utilized them as a strategist, a master chemist working in social elements, a mathematician. He would approach a subject in this way:

"Now the facts that count for us are these: One, two, three, four——" He would briefly enumerate them. "And the factors that are against us are these."

In the same way he would count them up, "One, two, three, four—— Are there any others?" he would ask. We would rack our brains for another, but generally in vain. Elaborating the points on each side, pro and contra, he would proceed with his calculation as with a problem in mathematics.

In his glorification of the fact he is the very opposite of Wilson. Wilson as a word-artist gilds all subjects with glittering phrases, dazzling and mesmerizing the people and blinding them to the ugly realities and crass economic facts involved. Lenin comes as a surgeon with his scalpel. He uncovers the simple economic motives that lie behind the grand language of the imperialists. Their proclamations to the Russian people he strips bare and naked, revealing behind their fair promises the black and grasping hand of the exploiters.

Relentless as he is toward the phraseologists of the Right, he is equally as hard upon those phraseologists of the Left who seek refuge from reality in revolutionary slogans. He feels it his duty "to pour vinegar and bile into the sweetened waters of revolutionary-democratic eloquence," and he treats the sentimentalist and shouter of shibboleths with caustic ridicule.

When the Germans were making their drive upon the Red Capital a flood of telegrams poured in on Smolny from all over Russia, expressing amazement, horror and indignation. They ended with slogans like "Long live the invincible Russian proletariat!" "Death to the imperialistic robbers!" "With our last drop of blood we will defend the Capital of the Revolution!"

Lenin read them and then dispatched a telegram to all the Soviets, asking them kindly not to send revolutionary phrases to Petrograd, but to send troops; also to state precisely the number of volunteers enrolled, and to forward an exact report upon the arms, ammunition and food conditions.

### *12. Lenin at Work in a Crisis*

With the advance of the Germans came the flight of the foreigners. The Russians manifested a mild surprise that all those who had

so wildly cried to them, "Kill the Huns!" now fled precipitately when the Hun came within killing range. It would have been good to join the hegira, but there was my pledge made upon the armored car. So I went out to join the Red Army. Bukharin, the Left-Bolshevik, insisted that I should see Lenin.

"My congratulations! My felicitations!" said Lenin. "It looks very bad for us just now. The old army will not fight. The new one is largely upon paper. Pskov has just been surrendered without resistance. That is a crime. The President of the Soviet ought to be shot. Our workers have great self-sacrifice and heroism. But no military training, no discipline."

Thus in about twenty short sentences he summed up the situation, ending with, "All I can see is peace. Yet the Soviet may be for war. In any case, my congratulations for joining the Revolutionary Army. After your struggle with the Russian language you ought

to be in good training to fight the Germans." He ruminated a moment and added:

"One foreigner can't do much fighting. Maybe you can find others." I told him that I might try to form a detachment.

Lenin was a direct actionist. A plan conceived, at once he proceeded to put it into execution. He turned to the telephone to ring up Krylenko, the Soviet commander. Failing, he picked up a pen and scribbled him a note.

By night we had formed the International Legion and issued our call summoning all men speaking foreign languages to enroll in the new company. But Lenin did not drop the matter there. He was not content merely with inaugurating something in the grand manner. He followed it up relentlessly and in detail. Twice he telephoned the *Pravda* office instructing them to print the call in Russian and in English. Then he telegraphed it through the country. Thus, while opposing the war,

and particularly those who were intoxicating themselves with revolutionary phrases about it, Lenin was mobilizing every force to prepare for it.

He sent an automobile with Red Guards to the fortress of Peter and Paul to fetch part of the counter-revolutionary staff imprisoned there.

"Gentlemen," said Lenin, as the generals filed into his office, "I have brought you here for expert advice. Petrograd is in danger. Will you be good enough to work out the military tactics for its defense?" They assented.

"Here are our forces," resumed Lenin, indicating upon the map the location of the Red troops, munitions and reserves. "And here are our latest reports upon the number and disposition of the enemy troops. Anything else the generals desire they will call for."

They set to work and toward evening handed him the result of their deliberations.

"Now," said the generals ingratiatingly, "will the Premier be good enough to allow us more comfortable quarters?"

"My exceeding regrets," replied Lenin. "Some other time, but not just now. Your quarters, gentlemen, may not be comfortable, but they have the merit of being very safe." The staff was returned to the fortress of Peter and Paul.

### *13. Lenin as a Prophet and Statesman*

It is clear that Lenin's prowess as a statesman and seer arises not from any mystic intuition or power of divination, but from his ability to amass all the facts in the case and then to utilize them. He showed this ability in his work, "The Development of Capitalism." There Lenin challenged the economic thought of his day by asserting that half the Russian peasants had been proletarianized, that, despite their possession of some land, these peasants were in effect "wage-earners

with a piece of land." Bold and daring as the assertion was, it was corroborated by investigation in later years. Lenin had not merely guessed at it. It was his verdict after extensive marshalling of statistics in the Zemstvos and in other fields.

One day, discussing with Peters the roots of Lenin's prestige, he said, "Often in the closed sessions of our party Lenin made certain proposals based upon his analysis of the situation. We voted them down. Later on it turned out that Lenin was right and we were wrong." On the question of tactics there have been Homeric struggles between Lenin and other members of the party, in which later events have generally vindicated his judgment.

Prominent Bolshevik leaders like Kamenev and Zinoviev held that in the proposed November revolution it was impossible to succeed. Lenin said, "It is impossible to fail." Lenin was right. The Bolsheviks made a gesture, and the governmental power fell into

their hands. None were more surprised than the Bolsheviks at the ease with which it was accomplished.

The other Bolshevik leaders said that though they might take the power they could not hold it. Lenin said, "Every day will bring us fresh strength." Lenin was right. After two years of fighting against enemies hemming them in from all sides, the Soviet advances on every front.

Trotzky pursued his juggling tactics with the Germans, decoying them along but refusing to sign the treaty. Lenin said, "Don't play with them. Sign the first treaty offered, however bad, or we shall have to sign a worse one." Again Lenin was right. The Russians were forced to sign "the brigand's" "the bandit's" peace of Brest-Litovsk.

In the Spring of 1918, while the whole world was ridiculing the idea of a German revolution, and the Kaiser's army was smashing the Allied line in France, Lenin in a con-

versation with me said, "The Kaiser's downfall will come within the year. It is absolutely certain." Nine months later the Kaiser was a fugitive from his own people.

"If you are going back to America," said Lenin to me in April, 1918, "you should start very soon, or the American army will meet you in Siberia." That was an amazing statement, as at that time, in Moscow, we had come to believe that America was cherishing only the largest good-will toward the new Russia. "That is impossible," I protested. "Why, Raymond Robins thinks there is even a possibility of recognition of the Soviets."

"Yes," said Lenin, "but Robins represents the liberal bourgeoisie of America. They do not decide the policy of America. Finance-capital does. And finance-capital wants control of Siberia. And it will send American soldiers to get it." This point of view was preposterous to me. Yet later, June 29, 1918, I saw with my own eyes the landing of Amer-

ican sailors in Vladivostok, while Czarists, Czechs, British, Japanese and other Allies hauled down the flag of the Soviet Republic and ran up the flag of the old autocracy.

Lenin's predictions have so often been verified by the events that his view of the future is, to say the least, interesting. Here is the gist of Naudeau's famous interview as it appeared in the Paris *Temps* in April, 1919.

"The future of the world?" said Lenin. "I am not a prophet. But this much is certain. The capitalist state, of which England is an example, is dying out. The old order is doomed. The economic conditions arising out of the war are driving towards the new order. The evolution of mankind inevitably leads to Socialism.

"Who would have believed some years ago that the nationalization of railroads in America was possible? And we have seen that Republic buy all the grain in order to use it to the fullest advantage of the state. All that

is said against the state has not retarded this evolution. True it is necessary to create and contrive new means of control in order to remedy the imperfections. But any attempts to prevent the state from becoming sovereign are futile. For the inevitable comes and comes of its own momentum. The English say, 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Say what you will of the Socialistic pudding, all the nations eat and will eat more and more of it.

"To sum up. Experience seems to prove that each human group goes on towards Socialism by its own particular way. Even the Letts go at it differently from the Russians. There will be many passing forms and variations, but they are all different phases of a revolution which tends toward the same end. If a Socialistic régime is established in France or Germany, it will be much easier to perpetuate it than here in Russia. For in the West Socialism will find frameworks, organi-

zations, all kinds of intellectual auxiliaries and materials, which are not to be found in Russia."

### *14. Lenin's Attitude Toward Men of Brains*

"For every honest Bolshevik there are thirty-nine scoundrels and sixty fools." This widely quoted sentence has been put into the mouth of Lenin in an attempt to picture him as the grand patrician with cynical mistrust of the masses. To support this curious charge a statement of fifteen years ago is dug up. It says that the working-classes of themselves developed only a trade-unionist consciousness, that is, the sense of organization, striking against employer, the eight-hour day, etc. But the ideas of Socialism have come to the workers largely from outside, from the intellectuals.

It is true that in all their actions and decrees Lenin and the Soviet government show

the high value they set upon brains. In every realm Lenin defers to the expert. He looks to the generals even of the Czar's régime as the authorities in military affairs. If Marx, the German, is Lenin's authority in revolutionary tactics, Taylor, the American, is his authority in efficiency production. And he always was stressing the value of the expert accountant, the big engineer, the specialist in every field of activity. He believed that the Soviet would be a magnet drawing them from around the world. He believed they would see in the Soviet system a wider range for the play of their creative abilities than in any other system.

It is said that Harriman was worn out not so much by the task of operating his great railroad as by the problem of financing it. Under the Soviet system he would not have to divert his energy from the work of administering to financing. For, under the Soviet, economic power is delegated to the head ad-

ministrator quite as we delegate political power to our representative in Congress. He is given the vast resources of Russia to work upon. Besides, Russia under the Soviet offers to the engineer or administrator not only its vast wealth to work upon but also a labor force, enthusiastic and alive, with which to work it.

This latter condition does not obtain under the capitalist system where the workman's greatest interest lies in his wages rather than in his work, and where the management and the labor force come into constant conflict. Under the Soviet the energies of the men, instead of being spent in quarreling over the division of the product, are liberated for the task of larger production. Lenin believed in the great results arising from the Soviet system calling out the enthusiastic creative energies of the masses and at the same time giving a free hand to the men of brains and genius.

In his survey of social forces Lenin made

his estimate of the value of all the different elements. The intellectuals had their place before and after the Revolution. As agitators they could help make the Revolution possible. As experts with skill and technic they could help make the Revolution permanent and stable.

### *15. Lenin's Attitude Toward Americans, Capitalists and Concessions*

American technicians, engineers and administrators Lenin particularly held in high esteem. He wanted five thousand of them, he wanted them at once, and was ready to pay them the highest salaries. He was constantly assailed for having a peculiar leaning toward America. Indeed, his enemies cynically referred to him as "the agent of the Wall Street bankers," and in the heat of debate the extreme Left hurled this charge in his face.

As a matter of fact, American capitalism

was to him not less evil than the capitalism of any other nation. But America was so far away. It did not offer a direct threat to the life of Soviet Russia. And it did offer the goods and experts that Soviet Russia needed. "Why is it not then to the mutual interest of the two countries to make a special agreement?" asked Lenin.

But is it possible for a communistic state to deal with a capitalistic state? Can the two forms live side by side? These questions were put to Lenin by Naudeau.

"Why not?" said Lenin. "We want technicians, scientists and the various products of industry, and it is clear that we by ourselves are incapable of developing the immense resources of this country. Under the circumstances, though it may be unpleasant for us, we must admit that our principles, which hold in Russia, must, beyond our frontiers, give place to political agreements. We very sincerely propose to pay interest on our for-

eign loans, and in default of cash we will pay them in grain, oil and all sorts of raw materials in which we are rich.

"We have decided to grant concessions of forests and mines to citizens of the Entente powers, always on the condition that the essential principles of the Russian Soviets are to be respected. Furthermore, we will even consent—not cheerfully, it is true, but with resignation—to the cession of some territory of the old Empire of Russia to certain Entente powers. We know that the English, Japanese and American capitalists very much desire such concessions.

"We have granted to an international association the construction of the *Veliky Severny Put,* The Great Northern Line. Have you heard of it? It is about 3,000 versts of railroad, starting at Soroka, near the Gulf of Onega, and running by way of Kotlas across the Ural mountains to the Obi River. Immense virgin forests with 8,000,000 hectares

of land and all kinds of unexploited mines will fall within the domain of the constructing company.

"This state property is ceded for a certain time, probably eighty years, and with the right of redemption. We exact nothing drastic of the association. We ask only the observance of the laws passed by the Soviet, like the eight-hour day and the control of the workers' organizations. It is true that this is far from Communism. It does not at all correspond to our ideal, and we must say that this question has raised some very lively controversies in Soviet journals. But we have decided to accept that which the epoch of transition renders necessary."

"So you believe, then," said Naudeau, "that, considering the dangers run here by foreign capitalists—dangers which do not seem to have been removed, and which one fears may be aggravated at any time—you believe that financiers will have courage enough to come

to Russia and let it swallow up new treasures? They will not begin such a task without the protection of an armed force from their own country. Will you consent to such an occupation?"

"It will be quite superfluous," said Lenin, "because the Soviet Government will observe faithfully what they have bound themselves to observe. But all points of view may be considered."

The reports from the Great Moscow Economic Council in June, 1919, show Lenin with Chicherin battling for the policy of economic alliance with America against the engineer Krassin leading the fight for economic alliance with Germany.

### *16. Lenin's Tremendous Faith in the Proletarians*

To Lenin, of course, the driving force of the Revolution, its soul and its sinew, was the

proletariat. The only hope of a new society lay in the masses. This was not the popular view. The conception of the Russian masses generally current makes them but shambling creatures of the soil, shiftless, lazy, illiterate, with dark minds set only upon vodka, devoid of idealism, incapable of sustained effort.

Over against this stands Lenin's estimate of the "ignorant" masses. Through the long years, in season and out of season, he insisted upon their resoluteness, their tenacity, their capacity for sacrificing and suffering, their ability to grasp large political ideas, and the great creative and constructive forces latent within them. This seems like an almost reckless trust in the character of the masses. How far have results justified Lenin's venture of faith in the Russian workinmen?

Their ability to grasp large political ideas has astounded all observers who have gone below the surface in Russia. It made a mem-

ber of the Root Mission ask in wonder, "How came so much of the mass of the Russian people, viewed by all the truly learned as ignorant and stupid, to seize upon a social philosophy so new to the rest of the world and so far in advance of it?" The hundreds of young men sent over by the Y. M. C. A. and other agencies were a puzzle to the Russian workingman. These "educators" were the graduates of American universities and yet they did not know the difference between Socialism, Syndicalism and Anarchism, which was the A B C in the education of millions of Russian workingmen.

The American propaganda agents spread President Wilson's Fourteen-Points Speech in Russia by hundreds of thousand of copies.

Passing these out to workers or peasants, they would ask, "What do you think of it?"

"It sounds very good," they would generally reply, "but there is nothing back of it. President Wilson may have these ideals in his

head, but there will be none of these ideals in the Treaty of Peace unless the workers have control of the government."

An eminent American professor who heard the Russians say this laughed at their scepticism. To-day he laughs at his own credulity and wonders how these "dark people" in the little Soviets in the remote parts of backward Russia had a better grasp on international politics than himself.

The British worked on the plan that it was only necessary to appeal to the immediate self-interest of the masses. They arrived in Archangel bringing jam, whiskey and white flour with which to seduce the people. The famished folk rejoiced to receive the gifts, but when they saw that these were bribes to blind them and that the price of these goods was the integrity and freedom of Russia, they turned upon the invaders and drove them from the country.

Time has also justified Lenin's faith in the

tenacity and resoluteness of the Russian masses. Compare the dire prophecies of 1917 with the facts of to-day. "Three days and their power is gone," croaked the enemies of the Soviets then. The three days passed into as many more, and the cry became, "Three weeks is the utmost that the Soviet can last." Again they had to change the cry. This time it became "Three months." Now, after eight times three months, the best the enemies of the Soviets can offer their backers is "Three years."

### *17. The Achievements of the Workers and Peasants greater than his Expectations*

The strength and persistence of the Soviet Government does not lie, as some infer, in the violation of all law, the strange whimsy of an inscrutable Providence. It rests just where Lenin said it would—on the solid achievements of the workers and peasants.

In the economic field they have started new

processes for the manufacture of linen, matches and the utilization of the great peat-beds of Russia. They have completed vast engineering enterprises ranging from the setting-up of power-plants and electric stations to the dredging of the great canal between the Baltic Sea and the Volga River and the building of hundreds of versts of railways.

In the military realm the workers and peasants submitted themselves to a stern military discipline which transformed the Red Army into one of the most formidable fighting-machines in the world. These proletarians have a distinct morale and spirit. Hitherto they have always fought in the interests of some superior caste. Now for the first time they are fighting—consciously—battles in their own interest and in the interests of the toiling and exploited peoples of the world.

But it is in the cultural realm that the triumphs of the "dark people" have been most significant. Make man free and he creates.

Under the quickening touch of the new spirit there have grown up ten new universities, scores of theatres, thousands of libraries, and common schools by the tens of thousands.

It was these realities that converted Maxim Gorky from a bitter enemy into a partizan of the Soviets. "The cultural creative work of the Russian Government," he writes, "is about to have a scope and form hitherto unknown in the history of mankind. The historian of the future will be unable to avoid admiring the magnificence of this last year of the Russian workers in the realm of culture."

More stupendous and significant are these achievements when one considers the handicaps under which the masses labored. When they took over the government they had as their heritage a people brow-beaten, impoverished and oppressed for centuries. The Great War had killed two million of their able-bodied men, wounded and crippled an-

other 3,000,000 and left them with hundreds of thousands of orphans and hundreds of thousands of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. The railways were broken down, the mines flooded, the reserves of food and fuel nearly gone. The economic machinery, dislocated by the war and further shattered by the Revolution, had suddenly thrown upon it the task of demobilizing 12,000,000 soldiers. They raised a bumper grain crop, but the Czechs, supported by the Japanese, French, British and Americans, cut them off from the grain fields of Siberia, and the other counter-revolutionaries from the grain fields of the Ukraine. "Now," they said, "the bony hand of hunger will clutch the people by the throat and bring them to their senses." Because they separated the church from state they were excommunicated. They were sabotaged by the old officials, deserted by the intelligentzia and blockaded by the Allies. The Allies tried by all manner of threats, bribery and assassina-

tion to overthrow their government, British agents blowing up the railway bridges to prevent supplies reaching the big cities, and French agents, under safe-conduct from their consulates, putting emery in the bearings of the locomotives.

Facing these facts, Lenin said:

"Yes, we have mighty enemies, but against them we have the iron battalion of the proletarians. The vast majority are not as yet truly conscious and they are not active. And the reason is clear. They are war weary, hungry and exhausted. The Revolution now is only skin deep, but with rest there will come a big psychological change. If it only comes in time the Soviet Republic is saved."

To Lenin's mind the episode of November, 1917—the masses spectacularly crashing into power—was not the Revolution. But these masses becoming conscious of their mission, passing into discipline and orderly work,

and bringing into the field their great creative and constructive forces—that would be the Revolution.

In those early days Lenin was never certain that the Soviet Republic was saved. "Ten days more!" he exclaimed, "and we shall have lasted as long as the Paris Commune." In opening his address to the Third All-Russian Congress in Petrograd, he said, "Comrades, consider that the Commune of Paris held out for seventy days. We have already lasted for two days more than that."

More than ten times seventy days the great Russian Commune has held out against a world of enemies. Great was the faith of Lenin in the tenacity, the perseverance, the resoluteness, the heroism, and the economic, military and cultural potentialities of the proletarians. Their achievements are not merely the vindication of his zealous faith. They are a source of amazement to himself.

## *18. The Russian Revolution a Success apart from Lenin*

As Lenin arises in Russia to become the central figure on the world's stage, a storm of controversy rages around him.

To the terrified bourgeoisie he is a bolt from the blue, an awful portent of nature, a world-devastating scourge.

To the mystically minded he is the great "Mongolian Slav," mentioned in that strangely fulfilled pre-war prophecy attributed to Tolstoy. After predicting the outbreak of the Great War, its causes and its place, it goes on to say: "I see all Europe in flames and bleeding. I hear the lamentations of huge battlefields. But about the year 1915 a strange figure from the North—a new Napoleon—enters the stage of the bloody drama. He is a man of little military training, a writer or a journalist, but in his grip most of Europe will remain till 1925."

To the reactionary Church Lenin is the Anti-Christ. The priests try to rally the peasants around the sacred banners and ikons and lead them against the Red Army. But the peasants say, "He may be Anti-Christ, but he brings us land and freedom. Why then should we fight him?"

To the man in the street Lenin has almost a superhuman significance. He is the Maker of the Russian Revolution, the Founder of the Soviet, the cause of all that Russia is today. "Kill Lenin and Trotzsky and you kill the Revolution and the Soviet."

This is to view history as the product of Great Men, as if great events and epochs were determined by their great leaders. It is true that a whole epoch may express itself in a single personality, and that a great mass-movement may focus itself in an individual. But that is the utmost that can be conceded to the Carlylean view.

Certainly any interpretation of history that

makes the Russian Revolution hinge upon a single person or group of persons is misleading. Lenin would be the first to scoff at the idea that the fortunes of the Russian Revolution lie in his hands or in the hands of his confrères.

The fate of the Russian Revolution lies in the source whence it has sprung—in the hearts and hands of the masses. It lies back in those economic forces, the pressure of which has set those masses into motion. For centuries these masses had been quiescent, patient, long-suffering. All across the vast reaches of Russia, over the Muscovite plains, the Ukranian steppes, and along the great rivers of Siberia, they toiled under the lash of poverty, chained by superstition, their lot little better than that of the beast. But there is an end to all things—even the patience of the poor.

In March, 1917, with a crash heard round the world, the city masses broke their fetters. Army after army of soldiers followed their

example and revolted. Then the Revolution permeated the villages, going deeper and deeper, firing the most backward sections with the revolutionary spirit, until a nation of 180,000,000 has been stirred to its depths—seven times as many as in the French Revolution.

Caught by a great vision, a whole race strikes camp, and moves out to build a new order. It is the most tremendous movement of the human spirit in centuries. Based on the bed-rock of the economic interest of the masses, it is the most resolute strike for justice in history. A great nation turns crusader and, loyal to the vision of a new world, marches on in the face of hunger, war, blockade and death. It drives ahead, sweeping aside the leaders who fail them, following those who answer their needs and their aspirations.

In the masses themselves lies the fate of the Russian Revolution—in their discipline and

devotion. Fortune, indeed, has been very kind to them. It gave them for guide and interpreter a man with a giant mind and an iron will, a man of vast learning and fearless action, a man of the loftiest idealism and the most stern, practical sagacity.

# RAYMOND ROBINS' IMPRESSIONS

# RAYMOND ROBINS' IMPRESSIONS

As Told to

WILLIAM HARD

## *1. Lenin in the Kremlin, Citadel of the Czars*

WALKING through the Most Holy Gate, Colonel Robins, the head of the American Red Cross mission in Russia, arrived in the inside of the Kremlin. He entered the famous building that had been the High Court of the Czar, and went up three flights of stairs to a little room, the walls of which were draped with velvet hangings. Here, at a great desk of beautiful wood, beautifully carved, the Czar had been accustomed to sit and sign certain papers of state.

There now sits Lenin, short-built and staunch-built, gray-eyed and bald-headed and tranquil. He wears a woolen shirt and a suit of clothes bought, one would think, many years ago, and last pressed shortly afterwards. The room is quite still. As he deprecates "the intoxication of the Revolutionary phrase," so he seems to reject the intoxication of Revolutionary excitement. He busies himself with reports of accounts and departments, and receives visitors for stated lengths of time—ten minutes, five minutes, one minute. He is likely to receive them standing, and he speaks to them in the low tones of a man who does not need to raise his voice.

In his manner of easy authority one may, perhaps, see his father, hereditary nobleman and State Councillor of the government of Simbirsk. In his ways of thought one is certainly reminded of his brother, executed as a political offender by the Czar's police when Lenin was but seventeen years old.

Colonel Robins never visited Lenin in this High Court Building of the Czar without thinking of that execution and of the sanction given to it—and to all such executions—by the State Church of Russia. Behind the gallows, generation after generation, in every part of Russia, stand the priests, with their vessels of gold, their vestments of lovely weavings, and their ikons, preaching obedience to autocracy, speaking the word of God in support of the word of the Czar, and blessing the hangman.

Out of that background came Lenin's utterances. He talked with no other assumption than that religion had departed out of the public life and out of the public policy of Russia, along with the Czar. He talked only of secular effort, of material organization.

### *2. Lenin's Growing Prestige as a Prophet*

On a momentous occasion, the occasion of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, Trotzky, in his propaganda, appealed to the German soldiers to

rise up and break their masters who made them march.

Would the German soldiers march? That was the immediate question.

"No," said Trotzky. Like all artists, he believed in the irresistible appealingness of his work. He had shown the German workingmen the folly and wickedness of marching, and they would not march.

"But they will," said Lenin.

There was a certain private meeting of certain members of the All-Russian and Petrograd Soviets. It was a time of supreme tension, of the stretching and snapping of many judgments and many reputations. The German Government had made its open and full announcement of its imperialistic and annexationistic policies toward Russia. In the Soviet there was consternation, indignation, fury. But would the Russian Army, in the field, fight?

"It will," said loud voices.

"But it will not," said Lenin. "It did not fight at Tarnopol. Kerensky was in power. He used all his influence and all his eloquence to make it fight. With the Allies he ordered the great advance. But the Russian army did not advance and did not fight. It ran, and it had to run. It is now no longer an army. It is only peasants wanting bread and land. It is going home. The Russian army will never fight again until it is reorganized into a new revolutionary army. The present army will not fight."

Lenin spoke very calmly. He had written out his ideas into "twenty-one theses," as though he had prepared a course of lectures for a college. Those "twenty-one theses" were his reasons for believing that Russia would have to sign the peace. They were crushing. But Lenin did not try to crush with them at that meeting.

He spoke for only about twenty minutes, and he spoke entirely without emphasis. He

merely stated his position. The Germans would advance; the Russian army would not fight; and the Russian Socialist Republic, in order not to be trampled militarily out of existence, would have to sign the peace.

Then Trotzky swayed the meeting. The Revolution was afoot in Germany. Trotzky saw it striding on. Comrade Lenin was mistaken. The German comrades were not so base as to fight for the terms of Brest-Litovsk. Besides, there was Poland, and there was Lithuania, and there was Letvia. They must not be surrendered to the Germans. The Polish comrades and the Lithuanian comrades and the Lettish comrades must not be deserted. We must hold them for the Revolution, said Trotzky.

"We must not be intoxicated by the Revolutionary phrase," said Lenin.

But Trotzky swayed the meeting, and Lenin let him. When Robins afterwards asked Lenin why he had permitted it, he said:

"I am willing to let Trotzky see if he can put off the peace. I am willing to let him see if he can save us from it. I would rejoice if he could. But I wanted the comrades to know what I am thinking. I wanted them to know it, so that they can remember it a few days from now. I have to keep their confidence."

During those few days and until they ended, Lenin was very unpopular. Most of the leaders of the Soviet were on Trotzky's side. To many of them Lenin's position seemed to be monstrous. But everything turned out as Lenin said it would. Yet each new thing he said was spoken amid a storm of protest.

"We will call the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Soviets," he said. "What?" was the answer. "Call the Congress now? It can't be done. Russia can't send delegates now. It can't bring its mind to think of sending them. And the delegates can't come, they won't travel, at this time. Impossible!"

"We will call it at Moscow," said Lenin.

"What?" was the answer, "Moscow? The stronghold of the reaction? Go to Moscow and the Hall of the Nobles and the haunts of the old régime? Leave Petrograd, the revolutionary city? Never!"

But it happened. The Fourth All-Russian Congress of Soviets was called, as Lenin had said. The Germans had advanced, as Lenin had said. The Congress met at Moscow in the Hall of the Nobles, as Lenin had said. It ratified the peace, as Lenin had said.

The shadow of Lenin grew upon Trotzky. It grew upon Radek. It grew upon Karolin. It grew upon everybody. More than ever they were eclipsed. More than ever Lenin was master. He had out-analyzed and outseen everybody. His books and his documents and his reports and his theses and all his scholastic methods and manners had not hindered him—perhaps they had helped him—in becoming his party's absolute realist and almost absolute ruler.

### *3. Lenin, Accused as a Traitor, Faces the Armed Mob*

One day, back in Petrograd, when the Germans were advancing, Robins went out from his hotel to walk along the Nevsky Prospekt. He made toward the Neva. A crowd of people was gathering at a corner. Robins saw that they were reading a placard, spread on a dead wall, and that they were greatly excited by it. He joined them. The placard, in purport, said:

"Lenin has absconded to Finland with 30,000,000 roubles in gold from the State Bank. The Russian Revolution has been betrayed by false leaders. But there is hope now for Holy Russia. The Little Father is coming back. The Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich is advancing from the Crimea with 200,000 brave, true Russian soldiers who will save Russia from the Bolshevik traitors."

Robins turned and hurried back to his hotel

to get his sleigh. He drove to Smolny, and waved his card at the doorkeepers, and ran upstairs. In the corridors were crowds of commissioners and clerks and guards, running, shouting, and running again, getting ready for something very imminent. Machine-guns were being unhooded. Their cartridges were being filled into them. The crowds, with the guns, surged over to one side of the building. Robins looked out from that side across the yard of Smolny, toward the Viborg—the Viborg workmen's quarter.

Two streets stretched from there toward Smolny. They were black with two streams of armed workmen flowing toward Smolny. They would overwhelm Smolny and clean it out and then flow to the Front against the Germans. Such was the cry.

Robins drew back from his window and worked his way through a corridor of dense, panic-stricken people toward Lenin's private office.

Lenin was there, receiving telephone messages from the Front. He was receiving personal reports from couriers. He was writing orders and sending them out. He was working without pause, as usual, and, as usual, without haste. He seemed quite unaware of any crisis.

Robins was thrust into the room by shouting men behind him who cried to Lenin, "The order to fire!"

Lenin jumped to his feet. For just one moment he, too, was excited. "No! No!" he said. Then again he said, "No! No!" this time angrily. "Shoot them? We will talk to them. Tell their leaders to come in."

Somebody went to call them, and Lenin sat down to his messages and his orders. The leaders of the mob began to come in and began to fill Lenin's office—workmen—in workmen's clothes—each with a bayoneted rifle in his hands and with a magazine pistol at his waist —workmen—soldiers—the men Lenin had to

rely on—the armed Revolutionary proletariat —the nucleus of the future Red Army of Lenin's Russia. They grounded their rifles. Somebody said to Lenin, "They are here." The outer door was closed.

Lenin rose and walked over toward his visitors.

"Comrades," he said, "you see I have not run away. Comrades, I was fighting for the Revolution before some of you were born. I shall be fighting for the Revolution when some of you are dead. I stand always in danger. You stand in more danger. Let us talk frankly."

He put his hands in his pockets and walked up and down, meditated, and spoke:

"Comrades, I do not blame you for not always trusting your leaders. There are so many voices in Russia today! I wonder that you have trusted us as much as you have.

"Among honest Revolutionists to-day there are two voices. One of them is right. One is wrong.

"Many comrades say:

" 'You must go to the Front and fight the Germans and die fighting—die fighting for the Revolution.'

"They do not pretend, these comrades, that you are willing to fight for anything except the Revolution. But they say, and they say truly, that the Germans are against the Revolution. And so they say, 'Go and fight the Germans.'

"I do not say so. I say:

" 'You are the new army. You are the only army of the Revolution. You are the beginning of it. What will happen if you fight the Germans? The old army is not fighting. It cannot fight. It is exhausted. Only you, with the Revolution in you, want to fight. You know what will happen. You will fight. You will die. And the soldiers of the Revolution will be dead, and the Czar will come back.'

"Would that be dying for the Revolution? Comrades, when we die, let us die really for

the Revolution. Let us die when by dying we can win victory for the Revolution.

"Comrades, my voice is right. They tell you I will make a shameful peace. Yes. I will make a shameful peace. They tell you I will surrender Petrograd, the Imperial City. Yes. I will surrender Petrograd, the Imperial City. They tell you I will surrender Moscow, the Holy City. I will. I will go back to the Volga, and I will go back behind the Volga to Yekaterinburg; but I will save the soldiers of the Revolution and I will save the Revolution.

"Comrades, what is your will?

"I will give you now a special train to the Front. I will not stop you. You may go. But you will take my resignation with you. I have led the Revolution. I will not share in the murder of my own child.

"Comrades, what is your will?"

"Lenin! Lenin! Lenin!" The room held no other sound. "Comrade Lenin! Comrade Lenin!" It was a judgment delivered. Hav-

ing delivered it, the judges picked up their rifles and marched out of the room and down the corridor, still delivering their judgment: "Comrade Lenin."

Such was Lenin face to face with his followers. Such was Lenin the personal leader.

### *4. Lenin Explains the Advantages of the Soviet System over the American*

On a certain day when Colonel Robins called on Lenin in that famous room with the velvet hangings, Lenin said to him:

"We may be overthrown in Russia by the backwardness of the Russian people, or by a foreign power, but the *idea* in the Russian Revolution will break and wreck every political social control in the world. Our method of social control must dominate the future. Political social control will die. The Russian Revolution will kill it—everywhere."

"But," said Robins, "my government is a

democratic government. Do you really mean that the idea in the Russian Revolution will destroy the democratic idea in the government of the United States?"

"The American government," answered Lenin, "is corrupt."

"That is not so," answered Robins. "Our national government and local governments are elected by the people. Most of the elections are honest and fair, and the men elected are the true choice of the voters. You cannot call the American government a bought government."

"Ah, Colonel Robins," replied Lenin, "you do not understand. It is my fault. I should not have used the word corrupt. I do not mean that your government is corrupt through money. I mean that it is corrupt in that it is decayed in thought. It is living in the political thought of a by-gone political age. It is living in the age of Thomas Jefferson. It is not living in the present economic age.

It is, therefore, lacking in intellectual integrity. How shall I make it clear to you?

"Take your states of New York and Pennsylvania. New York is the center of your banking system. Pennsylvania is the center of your steel industry. Those are two of your most important things—banking and steel. They form the base of your life. They make you what you are. Now if you really believe in your banking system, and respect it, why don't you send Mr. Morgan to your United States Senate? And if you really believe in your steel industry, in its present organization, why don't you send Mr. Schwab to the Senate? Why do you send men who know little about banking and less about steel and who protect the bankers and the steel manufacturers and pretend to be independent of them? It is inefficient. It is insincere. You refuse to recognize the fact that the real control is no longer *political.* That is why I say that your system is lacking in integrity. That is why

our system is superior to yours. That is why it will destroy yours."

"Frankly, Mr. Commissioner," said Robins, "I don't believe it will."

"It will," said Lenin. "Do you know what our system is?"

"Not very well as yet," said Robins. "You've just started."

"I'll tell you," said Lenin. "Our system will destroy yours because it will consist of a social control which recognizes the basic fact of modern life. It recognizes the fact that real power to-day is *economic,* and that the social control of to-day must therefore be *economic* also. So what do we do? Who will be our representatives in our national legislature, in our national Soviet, from the district of Baku, for instance?

"The district of Baku is an oil country. Oil makes Baku. Oil rules Baku. Our representatives from Baku will be elected by the oil industry. They will be elected by the work-

ers in the oil industry. You say, Who are the workers? I say, The men who manage and the men who obey the orders of managers, the superintendents, the engineers, the artisans, the manual laborers—all the persons who are actually engaged in the actual work of production, by brain or hand—they are the workers. Persons not so engaged—persons who are not at labor in the oil industry but who try to live off it without labor, by speculation, by royalties, by investment unaccompanied by any work of daily toil—they are not workers. They may know something about oil, or they may not. Usually they do not. In any case, they are not engaged in the actual producing of oil. Our republic is a *producers'* republic.

"You will say that your republic is a *citizens'* republic. Very well. I say that the man as producer is more important than the man as citizen. The most important citizens in your oil districts—who are they? Are they not oil men? We will represent Baku as oil.

"Similarly we will represent the Donetz coal basin as coal. The representatives from the Donetz basin will be representatives of the coal industry. Again, from the country districts, our representatives will be representatives chosen by peasants who grow crops. What is the real interest of the country districts? It is not store-keeping. It is not money-lending. It is agriculture. From our country districts our Soviets of peasants will send representatives chosen by agriculture to speak for agriculture.

"This system is stronger than yours because it fits in with reality. It seeks out the sources of daily human work-value and, out of those sources, directly, it creates the social control of the State. Our Government will be an *economic* social control for an *economic* age. It will triumph because it speaks the spirit, and releases and uses the spirit, of the age that now is.

"Therefore, Colonel Robins, we look with

confidence to the future. You may destroy us in Russia. You may destroy the Russian Revolution in Russia. You may overthrow me. It will make no difference. A hundred years ago the monarchies of Britain, Prussia, Austria, Russia overthrew the Government of Revolutionary France. They restored a monarch, who was called a legitimate monarch, to power in Paris. But they could not stop, and they did not stop, the middle-class *political* revolution, the revolution of middle-class *democracy,* which had been started in Paris by the men of the French Revolution of 1789. They could not save feudalism.

"Every system of *feudal aristocratic* social control in Europe was destined to be destroyed by the *political democratic* social control worked out by the French Revolution. Every system of *political democratic* social control in the world to-day is destined now to be destroyed by the *economic producers'* social control worked out by the Russian Revolution.

"Colonel Robins, you do not believe it. I have to wait for events to convince you. You may see foreign bayonets parading across Russia. You may see the Soviets, and all the leaders of the Soviets, killed. You may see Russia dark again as it was dark before. But the lightning out of that darkness has destroyed political democracy everywhere. It has destroyed it not by physically striking it but simply by one flash of revealment of the future."

### 5. *Lenin Adapts Programme to Facts*

On the very night on which he came into power, at Petrograd, Lenin spoke in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the decree regarding land. He said, in effect:

"You will notice, comrades, that in many ways this is not our decree. In many ways this is the decree of some of our political opponents. But we have taken into consideration the answers given by the peasants to the ques-

tions sent out to them. We cannot settle the problem of the land without regard for the ideas of the peasants. Time alone can tell, life alone can tell, whether we are right or they are right. In the meantime we must remember that we cannot impose our ideas when it is impossible to impose them. We must keep our ideas to put into force when we can, not when we can't."

Some months later, when Lenin was reproached for failing to carry out the nationalization of all industries more rapidly, he expressed himself to his critics in some such words as these:

"What would you have? I cannot make a Revolution anything but a Revolution. Our task a few months ago was to bring the Revolution in. Now we have to make the Revolution work. The formula then was: 'All Power to the Soviet.' The formula now is: 'Labor Discipline.'"

He went on then to the writing of his mes-

sage in which he said that all persons not working must be obliged to work, and that middle-class specialists must be hired, at any salaries necessary, to give technical direction to the factories of Soviet Russia. His critics took him to task at a great meeting of Soviet representatives. The hall was filled for hours with cries of "Bourgeois Lenin" and "Czar Lenin," from the extremists of the Left, and with serious hostile arguments from speakers moderate but alarmed.

At the end, when the night was far spent, Lenin rose to reply. He said that all the arguments made against him could be divided into a certain number of classes. He would answer them class by class. He proceeded to do so. He spoke for perhaps half an hour. He got a vote of confidence as unmistakable as the vote from the Red Guards in his office at Petrograd. Then he went back to the Kremlin and continued to pursue his policy of "Labor Discipline."

He said:

"I will cause a sufficient number of men to work a sufficient number of hours at a sufficient rate of speed to produce what Russia requires."

It was a sufficiently Russian remark.

One day a man—an American—came to Robins in great trouble. "I'm going to be ruined," he said.

"How? Where?" said Robins.

"My factory."

"Won't your men work?"

"Certainly they work. We're getting ten to twenty per cent more product per man under Lenin than we did under Kerensky."

"Well, what's your complaint?"

"Listen! This workers' control may be all right in the factory. But now they're going to put it into the buying and selling. They're going to put it into the office. It's all wrong in the office. It won't go. But they've sent us an ultimatum. I tell you it'll kill us."

"I agree with you," said Robins. "What do you want me to do?"

"Well, they say you can see Lenin. See him."

Lenin listened while Robins told him that this American company certainly has a lot of manufacturing knowledge, and that it is willing to go on using that knowledge in Russia and giving Russia the benefit of it if only the Bolshevik Government will compromise and not insist on putting workers' control into the office.

The compromise was made. Lenin wrote out an order stopping the putting of workers' control into the office.

Robins met the manager of that factory some time later, and asked him how he was getting on.

"All right," said he. "First-rate."

"Going to keep on?"

"Sure."

"Tell me. If you get out of Russia, who

will take your place making harvesters for Russia?"

"Why, some German."

"Of course," said Robins. Robins' advice was: "Stay in Russia. Stick. Russia has a Revolution. Lenin did not make it. He has led it, but he did not make it. Yet he does lead it. And he leads it, all the time, as much as he can, toward work—toward the task of actually earning a living in a living world. He is calling for engineering advisers now, for factory managers. To get them he is willing to negotiate, and he has tried to negotiate with foreign 'bourgeois' governments, and especially with the United States. To get them he is willing to compromise, just as he has compromised with my American business man. If we break with him altogether he will find it more and more difficult to make his Government compromise with American business men. If we go away altogether, and leave Russia, he will make his compromises and get

his factory managers where he can—and the quickest and easiest place is Germany. To fight Lenin is to play the German game."

### *6. Lenin Shows how to Preserve Law and Order*

Lenin, by April of 1918, had two immediate aims: work and order. About the middle of April, Robins went to see Lenin and said to him:

"About this May Day parade on the first of May. My men tell me there is going to be a lot of trouble. Why do you have the parade? It will cost a lot of money; and Russia is hungry and poor, and there will be shooting and murdering. Besides, what has it got to do with work?"

Lenin looked really quite surprised.

"We have to have work," he said, "but we have to have May Day. On every May Day past, for many years, we marched in honor of

the Revolution to come. Now, on the first May Day of the Soviet Republic, we march for the first time in honor of the Revolution accomplished. It has to be. We may march without shoes, but we will march."

Robins, however, persisted and went to see Lenin again, later in the month. He said to Lenin:

"It's just as I told you. There's going to be trouble. I'll give you just one case. My men saw a coffin being carried into a building on the line of march. Then they saw another coffin going into that same building. They kept on watching, and the coffins kept on coming; and now there are seven coffins in that building. And my men have taken a look at them inside. They're not coffins. They're machine-guns. That's what's going to happen."

Lenin, rather wearily, scratched some words on a piece of paper. Robins thought it was an order to capture and confiscate the machine-guns. It turned out to be much more.

On the afternoon of April 30th, Robins was in his room in the Hotel Europe. Some men came in. They closed the windows and sealed the fastenings of the windows. They warned Robins against breaking the seals till the parade next day was over. A regulation had been issued. It had been issued to the legally responsible "house committee" of every house along the line of march. Should a shot be fired at the parade by anybody in that house, then the whole "house committee" would be arrested and tried.

On the next day 42,000 people marched nine miles through a city filled with revolutionists and counter-revolutionists. Not a shot was fired, and not one man or woman was hurt.

It was a holiday; it was a workless day; but Lenin, after all, had not been able to forget work. He had caused certain words to be displayed conspicuously everywhere. They met Robins' eyes all day long. To Moscow cele-

brating the joyous overthrow of capitalism, these words everywhere said: "Labor Discipline," "Labor Discipline," "Labor Discipline."

Such is the temperament of Lenin the ruler, in working pursuit of his economic social-control state.

### 7. *Potency of Soviet Idea Source of Lenin's Power—Not Physical Force*

In addressing a meeting of American business men Robins said:

"Gentlemen, the people who tell you that the Soviet system is nothing but riots and robberies and mobs and massacres are leading you to your own destruction. They are giving you your enemy's wrong address and starting you off on an expedition which can never reach him and never hurt him. To hurt Bolshevism you need at least to get its number. Bolshevism is a system which in practice, on its record, can

put human beings, in millions, into an ordered social group, and can get loyalty from them and obedience and organized consent, sometimes by free will, sometimes by compulsion, but always in furtherance of an organized idea —an idea thought out and worked out and living in human thought and human purpose as the plan of a city not yet made with hands but already blue-printed, street by street, to be the millennial city of assembled mankind.

"Gentlemen, it is a real fight. We have to fight it with the weapons with which it can be fought. Against idea there must be idea. Against millennial plan there must be millennial plan. Against self-sacrifice to a dream there must be self-sacrifice to a higher and nobler dream. Do you say that Lenin is nothing but Red Guards? Gentlemen, let me tell you something. I have seen a little piece of paper with some words on it by Nikolai Lenin read and re-read, and then instantly and scrupulously obeyed in Russian cities thousands of

miles beyond the last Red Guard in Lenin's army."

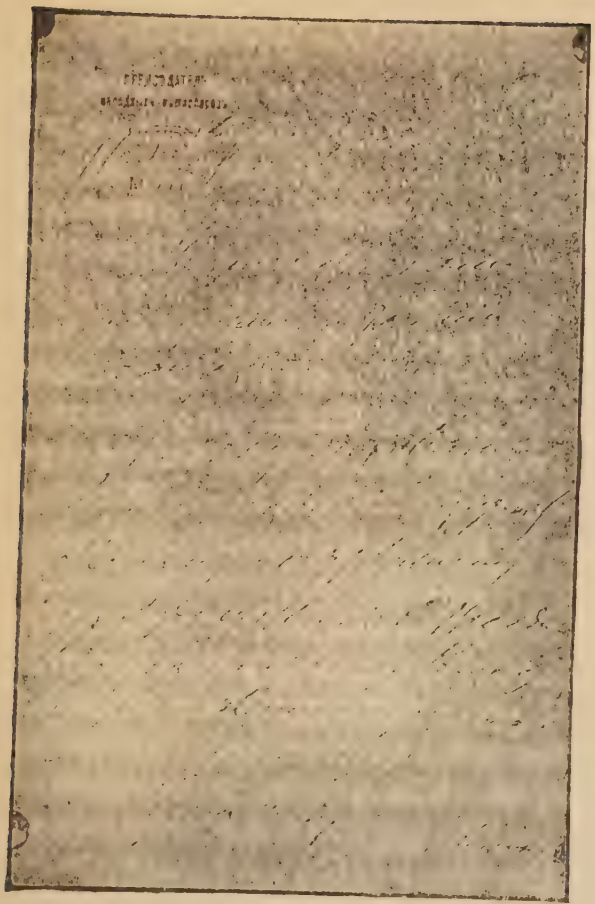
Robins was alluding to his experience on his way out from Russia back to the United States. He left Moscow on May 14, 1918, with a Bolshevik pass, but also with five rifles and one hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition in his special car. The rifles and the ammunition were the property of the Soviet Government. To get them Robins had to get a most special permit. He went to the Soviet Government and got the permit, and went around to say good-by to his friends and acquaintances in Moscow. He told them he was going out by Vladivostok.

"What?" said the experts in boulevard upper-world underground information. "What? Going out by Vladivostok? Not by Archangel? Not by Murmansk? Not by Finland? Do you mean it? By Siberia? My dear man, don't you know that Lenin stops having any say-so about anything at all when you get to

a point 500 miles east of here? Don't you know that all Siberia is overrun with Soviets who pay no attention to Lenin, and with brigands who pay no attention to the Soviets? Don't you know that the Soviets and the brigands between them will take all your money and probably all your clothes?"

"No, I do not," said Robins. He was weary of answering such questions in any other way. "No, I do not," he said, and boarded his train.

He got to Vladivostok. He got there in a running time only a few hours greater than would have been consumed by the running time of the Siberian Railway under the old régime. He himself has seen the Siberian Railway under the Kerensky régime. The Bolsheviks were doing better by it. There was less clutter. There was more energy. Incidentally there was food at every station. And, above all, the local governments were not raising their heads against Lenin as they had raised them against Kerensky.



President People's Commissioners, Moscow, Kremlin
5/11/1918.

To All Councils of Deputies and Other Soviet Organizations:

I beg you to give every kind of assistance to Colonel Robins and other members of the American Red Cross Mission for an unhindered and speediest journey from Moscow to Vladivostok.

President C. P. C.,
V. Ulianov (Lenin).

In 1917, when Robins came into Russia through Siberia, the Red Cross Mission with which he traveled was stopped at Chita by a local government, and had to run by stealth through Krasnoyarsk in order to avoid being stopped by a local government there. In 1918, when Robins came out of Russia, his Red Cross car was stopped nowhere. Nowhere did any local government interrupt it. Nowhere did any local government, after Robins had shown his credentials from Moscow, even attempt to examine it.

Between Moscow and Vladivostok Robins passed through fifteen different successive Soviet jurisdictions. At the first town within each jurisdiction there would be a commissioner and a platoon of soldiers. They would start going through the train to which Robins' car was attached. They would arrest persons whom they called rebels—counter-revolutionaries. They would confiscate property—vodka, for instance, and rifles—which they

called contraband. Robins had no vodka, but he had rifles. Moreover, he was a bourgeois. According to the boulevards he was entitled to be shot at sight by any true Soviet anywhere. Nevertheless, he would venture to show the Commissioner a certain paper. The Commissioner would sit in Robins' car, with his soldiers outside, and read this paper. Having read it, he would rise and bow, and say, "Please, thank you, good-day." And that would be the last Robins ever saw of him; and the soldiers never came into the car, and nothing in the car was ever examined or censored or in any way subjected to any local stoppage, interference or scrutiny.

The paper was a wish by Lenin. He could not physically enforce it; because at that time his Red Army was not large enough to reach so far; but it was a wish by Lenin. It said in effect that courtesy to Colonel Robins of the American Red Cross was desired by Lenin. It bore the words Vladimir I. Ulianov, and then

in parentheses the word Lenin. It was enough.

It was enough on the Volga, and it was enough on the Amur. On the Amur, at Khabarovsk, Robins came to a Soviet farther away from Moscow than any other Soviet on Russian soil. It was "The Soviet of the Far Eastern District," bordering the Arctic, bordering the Pacific. Its President Commissioner, A. M. Krasnoschchekov, read Lenin's letter, and at once, in due form, gave Colonel Robins of the American Red Cross the official freedom of the city of Khabarovsk and took him to attend a conference of the local Council of People's Commissioners, since Lenin wished him to have courtesy. On the Amur, four thousand five hundred miles beyond the farthest line then reached by any soldier in Lenin's Guard, Lenin's name was enough. It was the name of the Revolution, of the Soviet idea, of the Soviet system.

At Vladivostok Robins took his rifles and his cartridges and surrendered them to the

Vladivostok Soviet. He had not fired one shot. He had not read one shot fired by anybody else.

That was Siberia of the Bolsheviks. Today in Siberia the anti-Bolshevik ruler Kolchak cannot get obedience from the Siberian population and cannot keep the Siberian Railway for one day free from raiders and marauders without the help of scores of thousands of foreign Allied and Associated troops. In May of 1918 a letter from Lenin, without even a headquarters policeman behind it, could send a car across all Siberia from Cheliabinsk to Vladivostok unmolested and unsearched, and could get from every local governmental capital an immediate response of loyal fellowship.

# LENIN IN 1919

# LENIN IN 1919

By Arthur Ransome

## *1. Lenin's Views of George Bernard Shaw and the Revolution in England*

Whatever else they may think of him, not even his enemies deny that Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov (Lenin) is one of the greatest personalities of his time. I therefore make no apology for writing down such scraps of his conversation as seem to me to illustrate his manner of mind.

He was talking of the lack of thinkers in the English labor movement and said he remembered hearing Shaw speak at some meeting. Shaw, he said, was "a good man fallen

among Fabians" and a great deal further Left than his company. He had not heard of "The Perfect Wagnerite," but was interested when I told him the general idea of the book, and turned fiercely on an interpreter who said that Shaw was a clown. "He may be a clown for the bourgeoisie in a bourgeois state, but they would not think him a clown in a revolution."

He asked whether Sydney Webb was consciously working in the interests of the capitalists, and when I said I was quite sure that he was not, he said: "Then he has more industry than brains. He certainly has great knowledge."

He was entirely convinced that England was on the eve of revolution and pooh-poohed my objections. "Three months ago I thought it would end in all the world having to fight the center of reaction in England. I do not think so now. Things have gone further there than in France, if the news as to the extent of the strikes is true."

I pointed out some of the circumstances, geographical and economical, which would make the success of a violent revolution in England problematical in the extreme, and put to him the same suggestion that I put to Bukharin, namely, that a suppressed movement in England would be worse for Russia than our traditional method of compromise. He agreed at once, but said: "That is quite true, but you cannot stop a revolution . . . although Ramsay Macdonald will try to at the last minute. Strikes and Soviets. If these two habits once get hold, nothing will keep the workmen from them. And Soviets, once started, must sooner or later come to supreme power." Then: "But certainly it would be much more difficult in England. Your big clerk and shopkeeping class would oppose it, until the workmen broke them. Russia was indeed the only country in which the revolution could start. And we are not yet through our troubles with the peasantry."

I suggested that one reason why it had been possible in Russia was that they had room to retreat.

"Yes," he said. "The distances saved us. The Germans were frightened of them, at the time when they could have eaten us up, and won peace, which the Allies would have given them in gratitude for our destruction. A revolution in England would have nowhere whither to retire."

Of the Soviets he said: "In the beginning I thought they were and would remain a purely Russian form; but it is now quite clear that under various names they must be the instruments of revolution everywhere."

### *2. Lenin's Opinion of Colonel Raymond Robins, De Leon and Others*

He expressed the opinion that in England they would not allow me to tell the truth about Russia, and gave as an example the way in

which Colonel Robins had been kept silent in America. He asked about Robins, "Had he really been as friendly to the Soviet government as he made out?" I said: "Yes, if only as a sportsman admiring its pluck and courage in difficulties." I quoted Robins' saying: "I can't go against a baby I have sat up with for six months. But if there were a Bolshevik movement in America I'd be out with my rifle to fight it every time." "Now that," said Lenin, "is an honest man and more far-seeing than most. I always liked that man." He shook with laughter at the image of the baby, and said, "That baby had several million other folk sitting up with it, too."

He said he had read in an English Socialist paper a comparison of his own theories with those of an American, Danel De Leon. He had then borrowed some of De Leon's pamphlets from Reinstein (who belongs to the party which De Leon founded in America), read them for the first time, and was amazed to see

how far and how early De Leon had pursued the same train of thought as the Russians. His theory that representation should be by industries, not by areas, was already the germ of the Soviet system. He remembered seeing De Leon at an International Conference. De Leon made no impression at all, a gray old man, quite unable to speak to such an audience, but evidently a much bigger man than he looked, since his pamphlets were written before the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1905. Some days afterwards I noticed that Lenin had introduced a few phrases of De Leon, as if to do honor to his memory, into the draft of the new programme of the Communist Party.

Talking of the lies that are told about Russia, he said it was interesting to notice that they were mostly perversions of the truth and not pure inventions, and gave as an example the recent story that he had recanted. "Do you know the origin of that?" he said. "I was

wishing a happy New Year to a friend over the telephone, and said, 'And may we commit fewer stupidities this year than last!' Someone overheard it and told someone else. A newspaper announced, 'Lenin says we are committing stupidities,' and so the story started."

### *3. Sources of Lenin's Poise and Happiness*

More than ever, Lenin struck me as a happy man. Walking home from the Kremlin, I tried to think of any other man of his caliber who had a similar joyous temperament. I could think of none. This little, bald-headed, wrinkled man, who tilts his chair this way and that, laughing over one thing or another, ready any minute to give serious advice to anyone who interrupts him to ask for it, advice so well reasoned that it is to his followers far more compelling than any command—every one of his wrinkles is a wrinkle of laughter, not of

worry. I think the reason must be that he is the first great leader who utterly discounts the value of his own personality. He is quite without personal ambition. More than that, he believes, as a Marxist, in the movement of the masses which, with or without him, would still move. His whole faith is in the elemental forces that move people; his faith in himself is merely his belief that he justly estimates the direction of these forces.

Lenin does not believe that any man could make or stop the Revolution which he thinks inevitable. If the Russian Revolution fails, according to him, it fails only temporarily, and because of forces beyond any man's control. He is consequently free with a freedom no other great man has ever had. It is not so much what he says that inspires confidence in him. It is this sensible freedom, this obvious detachment. With his philosophy he cannot for a moment believe that one man's mistake might ruin all. He is, for himself at any rate,

the exponent, not the cause, of the events that will be forever linked with this name.

### *4. Lenin's Popularity at the Third International*

The meeting March 3d was in a smallish room in the Kremlin, with a dais at one end, in the old Courts of Justice built in the time of Catherine the Second, who would certainly have turned in her grave if she had known the use to which it was being put. Two very smart soldiers of the Red Army were guarding the doors. The whole room, including the floor, was decorated in red. There were banners with "Long Live the Third International" inscribed upon them in many languages. The Praesidium was on the raised dais at the end of the room, Lenin sitting in the middle behind a long red-covered table, with Albrecht, a young German Spartacist, on the right, and Platten, the Swiss, on the left. The

auditorium sloped down to the foot of the dais. Chairs were arranged on each side of an alleyway down the middle, and the four or five front rows had little tables for convenience in writing. Everybody of importance was there.

Trotzky, in a leather coat, military breeches and gaiters, with a fur hat with the sign of the Red Army in front, was looking very well, but a strange figure for those who had known him as one of the greatest anti-militarists in Europe. Lenin sat quietly listening, speaking when necessary in almost every European language with astonishing ease. Balabanova talked about Italy and seemed happy at last, even in Soviet Russia, to be once more in a "secret meeting." It was really an extraordinary affair, and, in spite of some childishness, I could not help realizing that I was present at something that will go down in the histories of Socialism, much like that other strange meeting convened in London in 1848.

March 6th.—The conference in the Kremlin ended with the usual singing and a photograph. Some time before the end, when Trotzky had just finished speaking and had left the tribune, there was a squeal of protest from the photographer who had just trained his apparatus. Someone remarked, "The dictatorship of the photographer," and, amid general laughter, Trotzky had to return to the tribune and stand silent while the unabashed photographer took two pictures. The founding of the Third International had been proclaimed in the morning papers, and an extraordinary meeting in the Great Theater announced for the evening.

I got to the theater at about five, and had difficulty in getting in, though I had a special ticket as a correspondent. There were queues outside all the doors. The Moscow Soviet was there, the Executive Committee, representatives of the trade unions and the factory committees, etc. The huge theater and the plat-

form were crammed, people standing in the aisles, and even packed close together in the wings of the stage. Kamenev opened the meeting by a solemn announcement of the founding of the Third International in the Kremlin. There was a roar of applause from the audience, which rose and sang the "International" in a way that I have never heard it sung since the All-Russian Assembly when the news came of the strikes in Germany during the Brest negotiations.

Kamenev then spoke of those who had died on the way, mentioning Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and the whole theater stood again while the orchestra played "You Fell as Victims." Then Lenin spoke. If I had ever thought that Lenin was losing his personal popularity, I got my answer now. It was a long time before he could speak at all, everybody standing and drowning his attempts to speak with roar after roar of applause. It was an extraordinary, overwhelming scene, tier

after tier crammed with workmen, the parterre filled, the whole platform and the wings. A knot of workwomen were close to me, and they almost fought to see him, and shouted as if each one were determined that he should hear her in particular. He spoke as usual, in the simplest way, emphasizing the fact that the revolutionary struggle everywhere was forced to use the Soviet forms. "We declare our solidarity with the aims of the Soviets," he read from an Italian paper, and added, "and that was when they did not know what our aims were, and before we had an established programme ourselves." Albrecht made a very long reasoned speech for the Spartacans, which was translated by Trotzky. Guilbeau, seemingly a mere child, spoke of the Socialist movement in France. Steklov was translating him when I left. You must remember that I had nearly two years of such meetings and am not a Russian. When I got outside the theater I found at each door a dis-

appointed crowd that had been unable to get in.

The proceedings finished up next day with a review in the Red Square and a general holiday.

### *5. Revolution Caused by Economic Conditions, not by Propaganda*

I went to see Lenin the day after the Review in the Red Square and the general holiday in honor of the Third International. The first thing he said was: "I am afraid that the jingoes in England and France will make use of yesterday's doings as an excuse for further action against us. They will say, 'How can we leave them in peace when they set about setting the world on fire?' To that I would answer: 'We are at war, messieurs! And just as during your war you tried to make revolution in Germany, and Germany did her best to make trouble in Ireland and India, so we,

while we are at war with you, adopt the measures that are open to us. We have told you we are willing to make peace."

He spoke of Chicherin's last note, and said they based all their hopes on it. Balfour had said somewhere, "Let the fire burn itself out." That would not do. But the quickest way of restoring good conditions in Russia was, of course, peace and agreement with the Allies. "I am sure we could come to terms, if they want to come to terms at all. England and America would be willing, perhaps, if their hands were not tied by France. But intervention in the large sense can now hardly be. They must have learned that Russia could never be governed as India is governed, and that sending troops here is the same thing as sending them to a Communist university."

I said something about the general hostility to their propaganda noticeable in foreign countries.

*Lenin:* "Let them build a Chinese wall round

each of their countries. They have their customs officers, their frontiers, their coast guards. They can expel any Bolsheviks they wish. Revolution does not depend on propaganda. If the conditions of revolution are not there no sort of propaganda will either hasten or impede it. The war has brought about those conditions in all countries, and I am convinced that if Russia were to be swallowed up by the sea, were to cease to exist altogether, the Revolution in the rest of Europe would go on. Put Russia under water for twenty years, and you would not affect by a shilling or an hour a week the demands of the shop-stewards in England."

I told him, what I have told most of them many times, that I did not believe there would be a revolution in England.

*Lenin:* "We have a saying that a man may have typhoid while still on his legs. Twenty, maybe thirty, years ago I had abortive typhoid, and was going about with it, had had

it some days before it knocked me over. Well, England and France and Italy have caught the disease already. England may seem to you to be untouched, but the microbe is already there."

I said that just as his typhoid was abortive typhoid, so the disturbances in England to which he alluded might well be abortive revolution and come to nothing. I told him the vague, disconnected character of the strikes and the generally Liberal as opposed to Socialist character of the movement, so far as it was political at all, reminded me of what I had heard of 1905 in Russia and not at all of 1917, and that I was sure it would settle down.

*Lenin:* "Yes, that is possible. It is, perhaps, an educative period, in which the English workmen will come to realize their political needs and turn from Liberalism to Socialism. Socialism is certainly weak in England. Your Socialist movements, your Socialist parties . . . when I was in England I zealously

attended everything I could, and for a country with so large an industrial population they were pitiable, pitiable . . . a handful at a street corner . . . a meeting in a drawing-room . . . a school class . . . pitiable. But you must remember one great difference between Russia of 1905 and England to-day. Our first Soviet in Russia was made during the Revolution. Your shop-stewards' committees have been in existence long before. They are without programme, without direction, but the opposition they will meet will force a programme upon them."

Speaking of the expected visit of the Berne delegation, he asked me if I knew Macdonald, whose name had been substituted for that of Henderson in later telegrams announcing their coming. He said: "I am very glad Macdonald is coming instead of Henderson. Of course, Macdonald is not a Marxist in any sense of the word, but he is at least interested in theory, and can therefore be trusted to do

his best to understand what is happening here. More than that we do not ask."

### *6. Lenin's Views on Property and Class Struggle*

He then talked a little on a subject that interests me very much, namely, the way in which insensibly, quite apart from war, the Communist theories are being modified in the difficult process of their translation into practice. We talked of the changes in "workers' control," which is now a very different thing from the wild committee business that at first made work almost impossible. We talked then of the antipathy of the peasants to compulsory communism, and how that idea also had been considerably whittled away. I asked him what were going to be the relations between the Communists of the towns and the property-loving peasants, and whether there was not great danger of antipathy between

them, and said I regretted leaving too soon to see the elasticity of the Communist theories tested by the inevitable pressure of the peasantry.

Lenin said that in Russia there was a pretty sharp distinction between the rich peasants and the poor. "The only opposition we have here in Russia is directly or indirectly due to the rich peasants. The poor, as soon as they are liberated from the political domination of the rich, are on our side and are in an enormous majority."

I said that would not be so in the Ukraine, where property among the peasants is much more equally distributed.

*Lenin:* "No. And there, in the Ukraine, you will certainly see our policy modified. Civil war, whatever happens, is likely to be more bitter in the Ukraine than elsewhere, because there the instinct of property has been further developed in the peasantry, and the minority and majority will be more equal."

He asked me if I meant to return, saying that I could go down to Kiev to watch the Revolution there as I had watched it in Moscow. I said I should be very sorry to think that this was my last visit to the country which I love only second to my own. He laughed, and paid me the compliment of saying that "although English," I had more or less succeeded in understanding what they were at, and that he should be pleased to see me again.

# CONSERVATIVE OPINIONS ON LENIN

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## *1. "New York Times," upon the Report of Lenin's Death, Sept. 2, 1918*

"Lenin was the most remarkable of the personalities brought by the world-war into prominence from obscurity. By many he has been regarded as the mere paid agent of Germany. Of this no proof has ever been forthcoming. An American, more or less in sympathy with his doctrines, who had rare opportunities of studying Lenin at close range, described him as 'the greatest living statesman in Europe.' It was a striking tribute to the personality of the man.

". . . He endeavored to put into practice theories which he had been preaching for many years before the Russian Revolution

came to pass. In those years he conceived and worked out in his mind a principle of social revolution which distinguished him from other Socialist thinkers by his uncompromising appeal to the spirit of class revolt.

"This spirit as an indispensable weapon in the construction of an ideal Socialist state he preached with increasing fervor as years went by, supplementing it . . . with something that was essentially lacking in the Marxian doctrine, namely, a political design under which the economic aims of a thoroughgoing Socialism might be put in effect. This political design found its expression, so far as it has gone, in the present Soviet government."

### *2. Frank Vanderlip*

"The personal picture of Lenin, with which I have found no disagreement in speaking with a number of people who are well in-

formed, is that he is a man of most extraordinary ability, and with some truly fine characteristics. He was a Russian idealistic noble and came to be a man of only one idea. He believed that the régime of capitalism meant slavery and that the world would find freedom in a communistic state of society. In his mind every motive was fine, every act moved by patriotic love and sympathy for the people."

### *3. London "Times"*

"Is Lenin a genius? Many Russians have denied it and certainly there is nothing in his personal appearance to suggest even faintly a resemblance to the super-man. And yet on second thoughts there is something in those steel gray eyes that arrests the attention, something in that quizzing, half-contemptuous, half-smiling look which speaks of boundless self-confidence and conscious superiority.

He is certainly by far the greatest intellectual force which the Russian Revolution has yet brought to light.

"The almost fanatical respect with which he is regarded by the men who are his colleagues and who are at least as jealous as politicians in other countries is due to other qualities than mere intellectual capacity. To qualities other than mere intellectual force he owes his predominating position in his own party. Chief of these are his iron courage, his grim, relentless determination and his complete lack of all self-interest.

"He has made use of the demagogue's arts, but behind all the inconsistencies of his policy, the tactics, the maneuvering, there lies a deep-rooted plan which he has been turning over in his mind for years and which he now thinks is ripe for execution. Demagogues have no constructive programme. Lenin at least knows exactly what he wishes to achieve and how he means to achieve it.

"In the many attacks that have been made against him no breath of scandal has ever touched his private life. He is married—according to all accounts, singularly happily married."

### *4. General Von Hoffmann, Who Imposed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty on the Soviet*

"It was a little upstart named Lenin that defeated Germany. Germany did not play with Bolshevism. Bolshevism played with Germany. Immediately after conquering the Bolsheviki we were conquered by them. Our victorious army on the Eastern front became rotten with Bolshevism. We got to the point where we did not dare to transfer certain of our Eastern divisions to the West. Our military machine became the printing-press for the Bolsheviki. It was Lenin and the Bolsheviki that broke our morale and gave us defeat and the revolution you now see ruining us."

## TWO ADVERSE OPINIONS

### I

*John Spargo in "How Lenin Intrigued with Germany"*

"Coldly cynical, crassly materialistic, utterly unscrupulous, repudiating moral codes and sanctions as bourgeois sentimentality, Lenin has for many years surrounded himself with desperate and shady characters, many of them having criminal records. Burtzev tells an interesting story which throws a strong light upon the unholy alliance between Lenin and Malinovsky, the police tool, and almost compels one to believe that Lenin was deliberately conniving at the betrayal of his comrades."

## II

### *Princess Radziwill in "The Firebrand of Bolshevism"*

"There were some who said that Lenin is an idealist and that he is honest, too. Lenin is neither an idealist nor an honest man. He is only an opportunist and an ambitious creature. He understands well a certain class of Russians, who like empty words and eloquent speeches and who never look ahead and never care to do so. What he aimed at was to become the absolute master in a land which he believed to be doomed and out of which he only hoped to save sufficient wreckage to be able to live not only in comfort but also in affluence the rest of his natural life. He was an exciter of the passions of the mob; he was no more of a ruler than Kerensky, and he could not even be called a leader of men, though he knew how to launch them on a career of crime and plunder."

# LENIN

By Anise

# LENIN

## By Anise

In a little room
* * *
In the Kremlin
* * *
Just off the high court
* * *
Of the old CZAR,
* * *
In a chair still bearing
* * *
The old czar's crest,
* * *
Sat LENIN,
* * *
A little bald-headed man
* * *
Of forty-eight years,
* * *
Patient, deliberate,
* * *
No lover of WORDS,
* * *
But a quiet, shrewd executive
* * *
Into whose eyes
* * *
The swift, sharp flash
* * *
Of a GREAT VISION
* * *
Comes for a moment
* * *
And is gone.
* * *
Lenin who saw in his youth
His brother's corpse swing out
* * *
From the czar's gibbet,
* * *
Who saw the PRIEST
* * *
Hold up the holy IKON
* * *
Blessing the Cossack's rule
* * *
Of WHIP and SWORD,
* * *
Lenin, the noble
* * *
Who swore in that hour
* * *
ETERNAL ENMITY
* * *
Against the ancient order
* * *
And went forth, suspect
* * *
To danger and prison
* * *
And long, long years of toil
* * *
And final TRIUMPH!
* * *
He sat there, calm and sure,
* * *
And said: "Colonel Robins,
* * *
The REVOLUTION
* * *
May FAIL in Russia,

For we are a primitive land
* * *
Forced forward
* * *
BEYOND
* * *
Our natural pace!
* * *
But we will keep alive
* * *
The FLAME of revolution
* * *
Till the WORLD is alight!
* * *
It will come first
* * *
In Bulgaria
* * *
And the Bulgars
* * *
Will cease fighting.
* * *
It will come next
* * *
In Austria
* * *
And the Austrians
* * *
Will cease fighting,
* * *
And THEN it will come
* * *
In Germany,
* * *
And the power of the kaiser
* * *
Will crumble inward.
* * *
When the day comes
* * *
That a Workers' Council
Rules in BERLIN
* * *
REMEMBER
* * *
The little man in the Kremlin,
* * *
Who said: "That day
* * *
Marks the beginning
* * *
Of the NEW WORLD!
* * *
Yes, even though the powers
* * *
Of ALL the EARTH
* * *
Combine to crush us
* * *
As once they joined to crush
* * *
The Revolution in France.
* * *
Yet as the IDEA
* * *
Of the French Revolution
* * *
Overthrew at last
* * *
The feudal lords of earth,
* * *
All its own CONQUERORS,
* * *
So shall the IDEA
* * *
Of OUR revolution
* * *
Overthrow in the end
* * *
OUR CONQUERORS!"